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Myrtle Blossoms

BY

MOLLY MYRTLE.

"And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity."

CHICAGO, ILL.:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHORESS BY J. C. W. BAILEY.

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First
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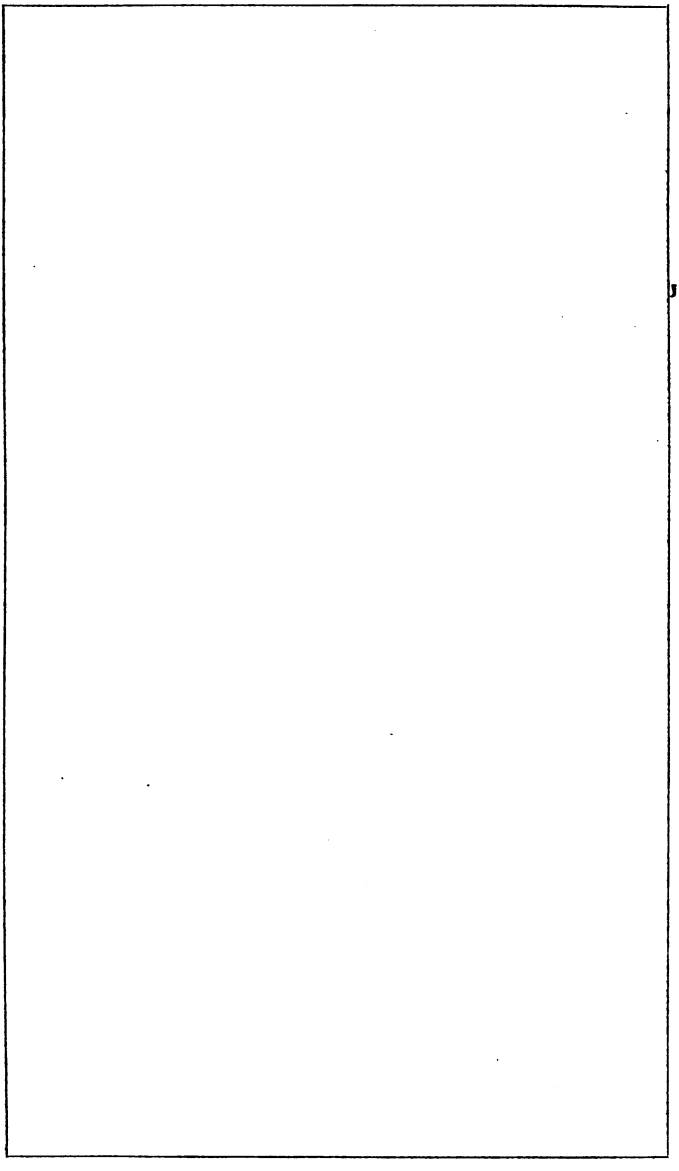
TO

George D. Prentice, Esq.,

OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY,

Do I Dedicate this Volume.



PREFACE.

"A young girl, twelve years of age, sends us a piece of poetry written when she was only ten. Though hardly worthy to be published, it indicates the existence of a bud of genius which, properly cultivated, will expand into a glorious flower."

And these words from your pen, Mr. Prentice, were the first that spoke unto my heart a prophecy for the Future whose brightness reached into my child-life a gay, unuttered song, whose words were "*Honor and Renown*," and whose melody was the exultant beating of Hope's pinions; and now that the petals of the bud essay to burst, dedicate I the new fragrance of their early blooming unto you! And though of themselves "MYRTLE BLOSSOMS," are scarcely worth a passing thought, yet consecrated, as they are, to the sacred cause for which my heart's tears have baptized them—they have a merit not their own to plead; and I feel that my humble offering on the great Altar of National Prosperity cannot be dedicated to one who has contributed more towards the glorious end, Union

and Liberty, than yourself! Doubly meet is it then, that I should dedicate these feeble "brain-children" to you, poet and patriot. Both because of the love and gratitude my childhood cherished for you and the admiration that is due from riper years to your genius and patriotism! So with your name and the holy ones, UNION and LIBERTY, crowning and adorning my book, I shall feel that many hearts will give it welcome that might otherwise be closed to it. And that it may steal, like a whispered benediction, into every heart whose generosity has contributed, by the purchase of this volume, to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded soldiers in the hospitals of Kentucky; is the prayer that my soul wings upward through earnest tears of hopeful waiting.

NEWCASTLE, KY., June, 1863.

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MYRTLE BLOSSOMS.

The Future's Rainbow.

From the dim enchanted Future,
Leans a picture strangely sweet,
Like the bow that spans the heavens,
When the rain and sunshine meet.
Through the rain of sorrow falling,
O'er a waste of blighted bloom,
Beams the sunlight of the Future,
Lighting up the dreary gloom.

Oh that picture rare and radiant,
Oh that picture strangely sweet,,
Like the bow that spans the heavens,
When the rain and sunshine meet;
Is a cottage vine-embowered,
Singing birds about the door,
Sunshine streaming through the window,
On the dainty cottage floor.

Roses climbing round the porches,
Like some merry elfs at play;
Rare vines drooping graceful tendrils,
In a fond endearing way,
O'er the doors that open softly,
To the pleasant rooms within—
Is it strange the sweet home picture
From the Now my heart can win?

Is it strange the Present's shadows,
O'er my heart can cast no gloom,
When the Future beareth for me,
Such "a freight of tropic bloom?"
Is it strange my smiles are shining,
Through the falling of my tears,
When my life hath so much gladness,
Waiting in the hastening years?

Like some gentle night-star, leaning
O'er a darkened vale below;
So the Future's sunlight streameth,
On the Present's bitter woe!
Oh that cottage, in the Future
Nestled in its roses sweet,
Shining like the bow of promise,
When the rain and sunshine meet,
Woos my heart like gentle music
Of a mother's favorite song,
Borne by summer's gentlest breezes,
On the breath of bloom along.

In that cottage, best beloved,
Shines *thy tender worshipped face!*
Making bright with smiles of loving,
All the distant sweet home-place.
"*Home sweet home!*" I've heard them sing it,
As I turned to hide my tears,
Gushing for the home I cherished,
In the glad evanished years.

"*Home sweet home!*" my heart runs gladly,
In an eager, joyous beat;
Smiles and tears make gorgeous tinting,
As when rain and sunshine meet.
Home sweet home! oh Father make it,
Fit me for the home above;
Make my homes on earth, in heaven,
Oh, my Father, *homes of love!*

After the Battle.

[Respectfully dedicated to Miss VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.]

I.

All day long the sun had wandered
  Through the slowly-creeping hours,
And at last the stars were shining
  Like some golden-petaled flowers
Scattered o'er the azure bosom
  Of the glory-haunted night,
Flooding all the sky with grandeur,
  Filling all the earth with light.

II.

And the fair moon, 'mid her sweet stars,
  With no mists of blinding tears,
Like "a pearl of great price," smiling,
  Just as she had smiled for years,
On the young land that had risen
  In her beauty and her might,
Like some gorgeous superstructure
  Woven in the dreams of night:

III.

With her "cities hung like jewels"
On her green and peaceful breast,
With her harvest fields of plenty,
And her quiet homes of rest.
But a change had fallen sadly
O'er the young and beauteous land,
Brothers, on the field fought madly,
That once wandered hand in hand.

IV.

And "the hearts of distant mountains
Shuddered" with a fearful wonder
As the echoes burst upon them,
Of the cannon's awful thunder.
Through the long hours waged the battle,
Till the setting of the sun
Dropped a seal upon the record,
That the day's mad work was done.

V.

Thickly on the trampled grasses
Lay the battle's awful traces,
'Mid the blood-stained clover blossoms
Lay the stark and ghastly faces.
With no mourners bending downward
O'er a costly funeral pall,
And the dying daylight softly,
With the starlight, watched o'er all.

VI.

And where eager, joyous footsteps,
Once perchance were wont to pass,
Ran a little streamlet, making
One "blue fold in the dark grass,"
And where from its hidden fountain,
Clear and bright the brooklet burst,
Two had crawled, and each was bending
O'er to slake his burning thirst.

VII.

Then beneath the solemn starlight
Of the radiant jewelled skies,
Both had turned, and were intently
Gazing in each other's eyes.
Both were solemnly forgiving—
Hushed the pulse of passion's breath—
Calmed the maddening thirst for battle,
By the chilling hand of death.

VIII.

Then spake one in bitter anguish,
"God have pity on my wife
And my children in New Hampshire,
Orphans from this cruel strife."
And the other, leaning closer,
Underneath the solemn sky,
Bowed his head to hide the moisture
Gathering in his downcast eye;

IX.

"I've a wife and little daughter,
'Mid the fragrant Georgia bloom,"—
Then his cry rang sharper, wilder,
"O God, pity all their gloom,"
And the wounded, in their death-hour,
Talking of the loved one's woes,
Nearer drew unto each other,
Till they were no longer foes.

X.

And the Georgian listened sadly
As the other tried to speak,
While the tears were dropping hotly
O'er the pallor of his cheek:
"How she used to stand and listen,
Looking o'er the fields for me,
Waiting, till she saw me coming,
'Neath the shadowy old plum tree.
Nevermore I'll hear her laughter,
As she sees me at the gate,
And beneath the plum tree's shadows,
All in vain for me she'll wait."

XI.

Then the Georgian, speaking softly,
Said, "A brown-eyed little one
Used to wait among the roses,
For *me*, when the day was done;
And amid the early fragrance
Of those blossoms, fresh and sweet,

Up and down the old verandah,
I would chase my darling's feet.
But on earth no more the beauty
Of her face my eye shall greet,
Nevermore I'll hear the music
Of those merry pattering feet;
And the solemn starlight, falling
On the far-off Georgia bloom,
Tells no tale unto my darling,
Of her absent father's doom."

XII.

Through the tears that rose between them,
Both were trying grief to smother,
As they clasped each other's fingers,
Whispering, "*Let's forgive each other.*"

* * * * * *

XIII.

When the morning sun was walking
"Up the gray stairs of the dawn,"
And the crimson East was flushing
All the forehead of the morn,
Pitying skies were looking sadly
On the "once proud happy land,"—
On the Southron and the Northman,
Holding fast each other's hand.
Fatherless the golden tresses,
Watching 'neath the old plum tree;
Fatherless, the little Georgian,
Sporting in unconscious glee.

Sallie Webb and Adele Drane.

Two small heads with shining hair,
Two white foreheads pure and fair,
Lips like berries wet with dew,
"Two eyes black and two eyes blue,"
Looking at the Autumn rain,
Sallie Webb and Adele Drane!

They are sitting with a book
In their hands, but not a look
Give they to the letters there;
Earth as yet hath brought no care;
What know they of learning's gain,
Sallie Webb and Adele Drane?

Round each other arms are twining
In each face child-love is shining:
Little angels free from guile,
They are lent to us awhile,
Lent to brighten hours of pain,
Sallie Webb and Adele Drane!

Now on me their eyes are turning—
Do they pity my heart's yearning?
Long to brighten all the shade
That the weary years have made?
Long to free my life from pain
Sallie Webb and Adele Drane?

No! They have a childish wonder:
"*Say, Miss Agnes, what makes thunder?*"
'Tis a wail for lightning vanished,
Like a heart's from sunlight banished,
When it weeps a tearful rain,
Sallie Webb and Adele Drane!

Dora Delwood's Story.

CHAPTER I.

And you want to know, Lissie Lawrence, why the shadows are ever folded over my face, and why my smiles are so faint and solemn. Lissie Lawrence, Lissie Lawrence, I thought the shadows in my heart were so deep down, and nestled so closely over the little grave there, that they could never climb up to my face. But your quick eyes have seen them, and their still solemn shading that falls over my cheek has read unto you a story that you would fain have me confirm. Where shall I begin? Back to the time when I whispered "Mother—mother," and *she did not answer me?* No, you won't care about hearing how they covered the white, smiling face from my anguished gaze, and said, "Earth to earth, and dust to dust" over the mother that would never again hold me in her arms when I was tired and sleepy. Neither will the sobbing cries of a motherless childhood interest you. So I'll begin at the time that opens a new era in every woman's life. The sacred time when

she first hears the "old ever new story" that she is beloved.

The evening shadows lay on the hillside just as you say the heart-shadows lie on the mournful paleness of my cheek. The winter winds were hurrying down the valleys, and I was dreaming of the spring-time.

It has been nearly two years ago, Lissie, and I was almost a child then—you may know I was, or I couldn't have been dreaming of the spring blossoms when *his* glorious eyes were bent upon me. But I was; and when he asked, "Do you love me?" I couldn't say "yes," and, oh! Lissie, there's a great pain in my heart because I may not live over those two lost years. Come closer to me, Lissie, and let me lay my head down in your lap, that you may not see the great woe treading over my face. I learned to love him, Lissie. I came to know what it was to be haunted by his tones, and to see, waking or sleeping, the regal glory of his eyes; but, oh, I was so young. It has been only two little years ago—and yet I'm a score of years older than when (my heart would break were it to tell you over the particulars,) I sobbed myself to sleep, knowing that *he was lost to me forever!*

These winter days, Lissie—don't they make sharp, shivering pains quiver through you? And don't looking at the sunbeams make the tears step out from the yearning stare in your eyes? It must be this chilly day that makes me feel so. It cannot

be the restless memories calling out from the drear silences in my heart. Two years—two years—it's a long time. It has made me a woman! Why do I reach out my hands imploringly toward the sealed gates of that quiet place, whose stillness no footstep breaketh, the land of the Past?

He is in Europe now, Lissie. He has forgotten the *child-love* that he once said was very dear to him. He has forgotten the clinging clasp of my fingers; the crimson kisses he used to take; the trusting eyes that sometimes drooped beneath his own. He has forgotten all that, but oh! Lissie, do you think he has forgotten the bitter words of hate I wrote one night when I was mad with the frenzied thought that he didn't love me? Oh, *do* you think he has forgotten *all* that would make him greet my memory with a reproach? You don't answer me, Lissie, for you know as well as I do, that he would have come back to me if he had forgotten it; and, oh, Lissie, press your fingers tight over my forehead, and hold its throbbings while I say it, perhaps—perhaps, never mind my tears, they come very quickly sometimes, perhaps—perhaps I say—*he may be loving some one else now.* He may be holding *another's* hand as he used to hold mine, and—press your fingers tighter over my forehead, you don't hold the throbs still. Yes, *now* you do, for the quivering pain has gone out from my temples down to my heart. When persons have heart-disease they feel this kind of pain, don't they?

And they die very suddenly with it, don't they? Do you think he'd care, Lissie, if some day he'd read in the list of the dead ones—

"Dora Delwood, aged eighteen years?"

Never mind, darling, brushing the tears off from my cheeks—they tread very softly, and don't seem to press out my life as the shadows do that are weighing so heavily on my heart. If you could just put your hand down there and lift *them* up a moment until I could take one more free glad breath, such as I used to take when I drank in eagerly the words he spoke unto me, of a future, that I never dreamed could *seem* so fair and radiant, and *be* so full of black despair.

Lissie, Lissie, I feel your tears dropping on my forehead. Are you thinking of dead "*Daisy?*" And are these tears a voiceless thanksgiving that *she* didn't live to put her head down in your lap and say—

"My heart is broken, sister, but if I could go down into the waves of death's river, I'd forget it."

Your tears are falling faster, and I know you *must* be asking God to forgive you that you grieved when He *spared her this suffering.* You said you planted the myrtle, too, over her grave, for *my* sake, didn't you? That was right—we loved one another! I've got her last letter up stairs, in my writing desk. I was reading it over last night, where she told me of her love for Marion Graves. Your "Cousin Marion," Lissie. They loved each

other, very much, didn't they? But even while they were talking of the happy years that awaited them, the listening angels looked at one another pityingly, for *they* knew that "*one should be taken and the other left.*"

"Do you think it would have broken his heart, Lissie, (as it did Marion Graves' when Daisy died) if I had died when he loved me so? Which would have been the worst—for me to have died and let his heart break over my grave, or for me to live with my heart broken over the grave of his love? What a selfish question! 'Twere better for a million hearts like mine to break than for one bitter pain to shake the life chords of a being like him. Oh, if I could know that in bearing this pain I am shielding him from the shadow and giving him the sunshine of life, I don't think my heart would faint so under its burden. Even if he didn't know I was suffering for him, I shouldn't care, for some day the angels would tell it all to him, and on the sunny banks in Heaven he'd tell me the story over again, and—and the room is getting very dark, Lissie, I cannot look into your face. But it will never be dark there.

Do you think we shall know one another there, Lissie?

CHAPTER II.

I resolved to put from me memories whose haunting presences were wearing out my life.

With her last fainting breath mother whispered, "Trust in the Lord—He will take care of you." And though, in my blindness, I could not see the way that He would lead me out of the darkness into the sunshine, yet I felt that He would do it, and I trusted Him. Oh, the sweet privilege of being able to trust in the Lord—to look off hopefully through the dim mists of slumbering years, and feel that "Our Father" is a merciful God, and will lead very tenderly over the rough places all who put their hands in His trustingly. Sometimes, Lissie, when faith grew weak, I felt as I imagine Peter must have felt when he cried, "Help, Lord, or I perish." Yes, sometimes the treacherous waves of doubt threatened to engulf me, then the blackening woe almost crushed me, but from the depths of that awful darkness I, too, held up my hands, with the old pleading cry, "Help, Lord, or I perish," and, Lissie, sweet friend, He heard me!

I did not pray that God would send *him* back to me. No, no, I only prayed for strength to live here and the glory of living hereafter. I felt that my Father knew what was best for me. I only asked for His protecting care. But think not the earth-love had gone out from my heart. No, Lissie, it haunted me "by day and by night," for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Then I asked for strength, and oh, Lissie Lawrence, look into my eyes, that you may realize the truth of these words, "God will not refuse to hear the cry of the deso-

late." Oh, if I could tell every heart sinking to-night under a crushing weight of woe, that God knows it. If I could whisper to every being, stumbling in the darkness of a great shadow, that God is able and willing to uplift the blackness and strengthen the fainting heart—how happy it would make me. Oh, the blessed boon of telling suffering mortality where to find consolation. Of making them feel how good God is; but, Lissie, the night winds whisper it, the stars trace it in burning letters of light along the blue waste overhead, and yet there are many eyes looking up through blinding tears, with no glad ecstatic thanksgivings lighting up the dreary byways of their aching hearts. God pity them wherever they may be, and for His son's sake lead them unto the "Tree of Life."

It is two weeks to-night, Lissie, since I sat with my cheek pressed up close to the window-pane of our old-fashioned reception-room. I was thinking of the blue heavens, the crowding shadows that nestled up under the cedar trees, and the night winds that kept chasing each other round the house; but more than all, I was thinking of him, Lissie. The room was very quiet and monotonous, but I was not lonely. No, no, I was thinking that God would take care of me, and my soul was soaring aloft with the glad hope that I should meet *him* in Heaven. I heard the reception-room door open, and knew that some visitor was about to be ushered

in; but for a moment I did not look round; I could not bear to have my reverie broken. I heard a smothered exclamation, and then—I saw the face that will never make my heart ache to think of.

When the May-days bring unto the earth their glorious birthright of sunbeams and blossoms, we are to be married! Are you glad, Lissie?

My Ideal Friend.

[Dedicated to S. L. M——.]

"Let thee take *his* place in my heart?" No, that
may not, cannot be.
For a fairer, brighter chamber holds its open door
for thee.
There no weary wailing mem'ries wander through
the haunted air,
And no rival faces greet thee with a cold, unmean-
ing stare!

Enter then the happy chamber, with the sunlight
on the floor
And the white-browed angel, "Friendship," keep-
ing watch beside the door.
Ere my life had ever known thee, ere thy clear eyes
shone on me,
Friendship kept this chamber sacred, yearned and
waited, friend, *for thee!*

Strove I oft to scan the features floating in the
phantom-light

Shed by Fancy o'er my spirit in the stillness of the night,
When my heart with noiseless pinions soared above the things of earth
Far above its bitter mockery and its hollow-hearted mirth;

Far into the shining valleys of the Future's mystic land,
Where my hand could feel the pressure of a faithful phantom-hand.
Where my soul could hear a whisper from a brave heart, fond and true.
Oh, a picture bright and glowing rose before my longing view,

Of a Friendship pure and lasting, reaching with a golden gleam
O'er a life whose fairest fancy was its glowing Friendship-dream.
Many loudly knocked for entrance at the pleasant chamber-door,
Where the Angel's radiant smiling made the sunlight on the floor,

But the Angel smiled, and pointed to the claimants one and all,
Smaller rooms, with lower ceilings, lying just across the hall.

And my heart in gentle pity, hung their faces on the wall,
Wrote their names, in hopeful yearning, in the rooms across the hall.

Left the Angel waiting, smiling, like some gay, expectant bride,
Looking at the names and faces leaning from the other side.
One by one the faces faded from their frame-work on the wall,
One by one the lights were darkened in the rooms across the hall.

"*All unworthy—most unworthy!*" floated through the haunted air!
Gone are all the shapes of beauty, echo only answers "*Where!*"
And the Angel, at the doorway, smiling through the bitter pain,
Sobbed out by a wailing spirit, sacred kept her pure domain!

Kept the Friendship-chamber spotless, with its breath of blossom sweet,
Kept it in most tender waiting for its destined Ruler's feet.
Enter then—it bids *thee* "Welcome," angel-eyes have read thy soul,

Long hath been its tender waiting, enter thou, and
take control!

Train the roses at the window, with the heavenly
smiles of *Trust;*
From the paintings smiling on thee keep Oblivion's
dimming dust.
On the walls write holy wishes, born of angel-
prompted thought,
On thy actions daily, nightly let "Our Father's"
smile be sought!

For the Angel, "Friendship," standeth near the
door with quiet grace,
With a prayerful pleading, yearning, looking ever
in thy face.
Praying that thy feet may never stain the sacred
shining floor,
That the room may ne'er be darkened, standing
with its bolted door—

Keeping hidden faded fancies, lying dead and
pulseless all
'Neath the still and solemn shading of their droop-
ing funeral-pall;
Keeping hidden bitter memories written on the
golden wall,
Like those smaller rooms in shadow, lying just
across the hall.

But when years have come and vanished, may the
room its splendor wear,
Like some garden, rare and radiant, blooming in
the summer air!
May thy face grow fair and fairer, leaning from the
shining wall,
And may thou and I be ready, when we "hear
the angels call!"

Meeta Glenn's Letters.

SEPTEMBER 2d, 1808.

Nannie Ryon, Nannie Ryon, through the twilight of its vanished bliss my heart looks back to the days when you and I, wandering arm and arm through that dim old forest round the little country school-house, talked of a future whose glittering heights shone down on us like the crimson glory of an autumn sunset. And now, as your fair, dimpled face, with its full, red lips and blue, laughing eyes, shines down from the vanished past, my heart bends over with a tender caress, that is half mournful as memory whispers of the years since we parted. You have not forgotten me, Nannie; I know this by the hidden fountain in my own heart, whose soft gurgling whispers ever of the love that once bound our two lives in a close embrace. Nearly three years, and yet it seems but yesterday since my heart brimmed over with its misty tears when I whispered "Good-bye, Nannie." Ah! it has been a great many "yesterdays" since then; and now, as on the soft waves of remembrance they come

drifting back, what a story they tell unto me—a story that I have *lived* since we stood on the old stile blocks, and your brother Will held the bridle of the little pony I was going to ride away from your home—away from that old red farmhouse, where on pleasure's wing the gay moments had hurried by—away from your sainted mother, whose sweet, patient face memory caresses; and more than all, away from *you*, Nannie, whose dear image my heart carried "by day and by night."

Shall I tell you the story? Will you listen patiently, and when I have done will you whisper, "*Dear* Meeta," and drop a quivering tear over the image hung in a solemn corner of your heart—the time-dimmed image of Meeta Glenn? Will you forget the cold, estranging years that have passed? And will you say unto me the words I used to hear dropping from your gentle lips, "I love you?"

Say them to me once more, and though I may not lay my head up 'gainst your heart, and feel your arms about me, yet write the words to me once more. They are sweet words! I never hear them spoken, ever so carelessly, without feeling a quivering thrill waken up my being as I remember *one* time, a *sacred* time, fraught with hallowed joy, when I heard them. I used to tell you everything, Nannie. My girlish worship of the unseen genius, Virginia F. T. Together we read "Look Out;" then I told you how I was dreaming of a fame that maybe the years would bring unto *me;* and

perhaps somebody would cry over my stories—somebody would pray God, "Please, Father, let us meet some time;" and maybe somebody would love *me* for *my* writing, even as we loved so reverently Virginia F. T.

'Twas a bright dream, and looking into your pure eyes, how I loved to tell you of it! Yes, I used to tell you everything; and now may I tell you of this, Nannie?—of this dream, the sweetest I ever "loved and lost," whose vanished rapture makes my heart sigh through a twilight that only the radiance from the silver-crowned mountains of the great "Hereafter," may banish and lead into the golden glory of a perfect day.

'Tis growing late, and twilight mantles the earth and the sky, just as a twilight mantles my life and tones to sober gray those purple glories that once beamed from the hope-crowned hilltops of my eager heart. I cannot write much more now, but when you have written unto me words of sweet remembrance and loving tenderness I will tell you the story of my life. Yes, though death has not yet won me from the uncertain joys of this life, yet I feel that when they "lay me down to sleep," the angels will call this the story of my life. Future years may bring many changes unto me. I may be a busy actor in the varied scenes of earth, but I shall be merely an *actor*, having no feeling, no hope, neither joy, in aught save the memory that one time my being thrilled to the triumphant

melody of loving and being loved. It is indeed the story of my life; and though you will hear it at the last day, when all things are revealed, yet I will tell it to you in my next, Nannie, because of the love we have borne for each other; and because the weight of its hidden grave is very heavy in my heart.

You will write very soon, and think always very tenderly of MEETA GLENN.

SWEET HOME, Sept. 20th, 1808.

'Tis such a day, dear Nannie, as Virginia F. T. would call "a sweet poem," that, with my heart all quivering with its restless memories, I take up my pen to write unto you the story of my life.

Oh, Nannie, when the angel wrote it in the Book of Record, did my mother rest her shining wings on the sacred volume, and drop sorrowing tears as she read an anguish, of which I have no power to tell you. And when she heard the prayers my burdened soul sent up, did she not lift her pleading eyes, with an unspoken prayer, that God would be merciful to her child? Yes, yes, she must have done it, or how could this calm have settled over my tempest-beaten soul? And yet, Nannie Ryon, do the tears blind me, because I'm dreaming of one time, the thought of which is a bright gem in that glorious landmark of life's journey, when Marcus Heith said unto me,

"Let us link our lives together, Meeta."

I did not love him then, but in my childishness wept that I did not.

With my natural and cultivated romance, I felt that it would be the story of *his* life. A love that would forever haunt the future years, and cloud them with the woe of being unloved. And so I prayed that God would make me love him. I was very wicked, but will not my mother, angel-crowned, plead for her erring child?

The prayer was answered! And oh, friend of heart, may Heaven grant that you never feel a woe like that which my answered prayer brought unto me! I must tell you of it, though Nannie, Nannie, an enmity I have tried to bury, rises up and wrings my soul as conscience thunders. "If ye love not your brother whom ye have seen, how can ye love God whom ye have not seen?" Did you ever hate anybody, Nannie? No, for you never knew Mildred Wentworth! She is a distant cousin of mine, and her house was my home when the "Future called down to the Present" so bright a prophecy of happiness in the love of Marcus Heith.

"I have too much confidence in you, Meeta, to ask you to keep the cherished secret of my love for you from the ridicule of those around us. I know that no vain pride of conquest will make you betray me."

And looking into the eloquent eyes of Marcus Heith, I answered solemnly,

"I never will!"

And the angels know how reverently my soul bowed herself as she echoed the words. But she, Mildred Wentworth, *made* me tell *her*. I never knew *how* she did it. I only know that one time, sobbing on her breast, I told her of this love, which I prized so much, but could not return. Though I was cherishing a sweet hope of learning to love him, and reveling in the perfect bliss of a mutual affection. I did not intend to tell her all, or any of this, yet somehow I did, and then frightened by a dim prophecy of a coming sorrow, I whispered,

"Cousin Mildred, you will never betray this, will you? Oh, I didn't mean to tell you, but somehow my heart ached so I couldn't help it."

And she, may God forgive her, promised, in the solemn hush of that winter twilight, that no word of it should ever pass her lips; and, Nannie Ryon, I believed her. Perhaps 'twas well that I did, after the mischief was done, for my dreams that night were peaceful as when mother hushed me on her breast in the innocent days of my lost babyhood.

Mildred Wentworth, Mildred Wentworth, I have prayed God to take this bitter hatred out of my heart; I have prayed that He would forgive you; and oh, I have prayed that I might meet you in Heaven; yet I never mention your name without quivering and burning with my strugglings to keep down the thoughts that arise, as I remember how,

without any cause of which I know, for enmity toward me, you betrayed my trust, broke your own solemn promise, and oh, Mildred Wentworth, broke something far more earnest and loving, my heart, that must ever mourn for a lost love, in whose light it lived.

Oh, Marcus Heith, now *your* face is before me; and again I see the grieved, disappointed expression, striking out all the tenderness from your smile, that seemed half bitter with contempt, as you spoke of Mildred Wentworth's telling about my "boasting of a conquest."

And I, cold and desolate, and miserable, listened, feeling that I could offer no word in extenuation of my broken contract; yet, as he was going, he took my hand and said,

"My dear child, for your own sake, do not mention this affair again."

He would have loved me then in spite of all, but we parted, and she built up a great barrier between us—a barrier that years have only strengthened—a yawning gulf, in whose black abyss are flung the fallen stars of Love, and Hope, and Joy, that Despair hurled from my life's sky. I do not know all she told him. I only remember a letter that came to me from him, whose cold, cruel words bowed me in prostrate anguish, and wrung from me the piteous cry that God would let me die! But there was no room in Heaven for me, no little, vacant spot where my torn, bleeding heart could find a refuge.

I have never seen him but once since, and then my evil genius made my face wear a look of scorn toward him whose love had been the sweetest joy my life had ever known.

I had lived half hoping that some time the love he once bore me would rise up from its shadowed grave, and lead him unto me. Now, that hope is dead, for, three months ago, he went to Europe; and, Nannie, Nannie, until our grave-clothes rustle 'gainst each other, I shall never see him any more!

Perhaps, when we are angels together, he will remember our earth-love, and let me walk by his side in Heaven!

Oh, Nannie, I have wakened out of the old, charmed life! I have no wishes, no joys here now, but over the ruined waste in my heart is bridged a newly-born hope, that some day I may walk amid the purple splendors which light up the shores of that land where mother is waiting for her weary-hearted

MEETA.

SEPTEMBER 2d, 1810.

It has been a weary while, dear Nannie, since your last letter came unto me, and almost a year since I last wrote; but as we have been together so much, what need of writing?

I think it was a month after you left us, that my Uncle Wilmot, from Louisiana, started with me to visit Niagara, which you know, Nannie, is a long way from our own Southern home. You have no

doubt read, ere this, an account of the burning of the Gayleton House, in D——— City. We were in that house the night it was burned! I do not know how long I had been asleep when a wild cry of fire awakened me. Springing up hastily, and folding a shawl, that happened to be near, about me, I hastened out into the hall. It was perfectly light with the blaze overhead, and, as I stood there, facing, for one brief moment, what seemed to be my death, whose face do you think was before me? *The face of Mildred Wentworth!* Pale and frightened I saw her rush down the staircase, unheeding, in her frantic haste, the child she had, the moment before, held slumbering to her bosom!

She has one favorite child, whom she never permits to leave her. I had got half way down the steps, and she was in the hall below, when with a piercing shriek, she exclaimed,

"My child! my child! for Heaven's sake save him!"

At the same moment she started to ascend the steps, but a pair of strong arms drew her back, and a voice, which I did not recognize, exclaimed sternly,

"'Twill be death to go back—save yourself!" and she was pushed out into the open air.

I saw the fire above—the steps had caught! I thought of the baby's being an angel if it died; I thought perhaps it might be death to go back; and I thought of the great wrong Mildred Wentworth

had done me, then I turned hastily, and fled up the steps! On the wings of the wind I seemed to fly up to that room—then I clasped the frightened, screaming child in my arms, and with blistered feet and scorched face, I found my way out into the open air, where I found Mrs. Wentworth insensible from grief, at being unable to rescue her child. And I, the creature whose life she had made desolate, the trusting heart she had broken, bent over her, and when she opened her eyes, with a shudder, it was I put the child in her arms and said,

"Your child is safe!"

"Who saved him?" she screamed. "Tell me—to whom do I owe my life's gratitude?"

And, Nannie, I couldn't help it, but I almost shrieked out, "To me—Meeta Glenn—the girl who loved you as a mother, but whom you betrayed, and whose life you have made an unprofitable woe!"

I did not feel as if I were speaking; I seemed to be listening to a second self telling her this. She made no reply, only stared at me, and pressed her child up closer with a convulsive grasp. I felt a hand upon my shoulder. It was my uncle, who lifted me into a carriage and took me away from that dense throng that stood gazing, awe-stricken, upon the burning building.

The next day we heard that an epidemic was raging in the city, and we left immediately.

It was not long after this that we were passing through D———, and put up for the night at the

H——— Hotel. I supped in my room the first evening of our arrival, and, of course, had no opportunity of knowing whether I was in the house with any of my friends or acquaintances. It was soon after tea that I heard quick footsteps hurrying to and fro in the hall, and opening the door of my room I asked a chambermaid, who was passing, if anything unusual was the matter.

"Mrs. Wentworth, the lady in No. 40, has taken the cholera, and they think is dying," she replied.

I did not stop to ask if it could be Mildred Wentworth, but hastened across the hall and tapped gently at No. 40. There were two or three physicians, Mr. Wentworth, and several ladies in the room. As the door was opened, Mildred Wentworth fixed her fading eyes upon my face as she screamed,

"Meeta Glenn! Meeta Glenn! I knew you'd come before I died! Leave the room, all of you! I have something to say!"

They looked at us wonderingly, and one by one went out. A moment afterward the door opened, and a man whom I supposed to be Mr. Wentworth sat down behind me, and sheltered by the flowing window curtains seemed to listen. I did not look round. I felt that Mr. Wentworth had come to hear his wife's confession, and I appeared unconscious of his presence. She did not see him, and I do not think noticed his entrance, for she said,

"Meeta Glenn, I'm sorry I did so! Can I make any reparation by telling you of it?"

"Reparation, indeed!" I burst forth impetuously. "Can you give me back the trusting faith, the golden hopes and happy heart you have destroyed? Can you give me back the wasted years of woe, that might have been glad years of usefulness? And, woman, can you give me back the love of Marcus Heith?"

"No, oh, no!" she groaned.

"Then I want nothing!" the same fierce spirit answered. "What does a death-bed repentance avail when the golden moments of health were employed to strike out all the hope and joy from my life?"

"You saved my child! Oh, forgive his mother, now she's dying!" she moaned.

I sunk on my knees, and in the bitter struggling of that moment prayed, "Oh, my Father, help me, for Christ's sake, to forgive her! Help, Lord, or I perish!"

After awhile I rose up, almost calmly, and said,

"Mildred Wentworth, I do forgive you! May God have mercy upon you!"

"Meeta, Meeta, darling Meeta!"

It was *his* voice, Nannie! It was *Marcus Heith* that had seen me enter that room and had followed me when I thought it was Mildred Wentworth's husband. Mildred Wentworth is dead, and I'm sorry now that I did not sooner conquer the enmity I bore her. Marcus came home with me. Everything is explained, the cold, estranging years for-

gotten, and we are to be married when the purple glories of the glad October brighten the hills. And now, Nannie Ryon, whatever woe may fold its sable wings about you, be patient, and hopeful, and trusting, having your heart made strong by faith that Our Father is a merciful God to them that love Him, and some day will lead you out from the shadow into the sunshine, even as He has done

MEETA GLENN.

On My Picture.

Taken March, 1852.

Oh childish face! Your joyous gleam
  Steals softly through my heart and brain,
Like some fair, mocking, vanished dream,
  Whose splendor may not come again.
Oh joyous face! whose careless brow
  Hath all of light Hope's sunshine gave,
My heart is aching o'er thee now,
  To think how Sorrow's blighting wave
Hath changed that smiling, youthful face,
  And dimmed with tears those laughing eyes,
And made the sinless breast a place
  For bitter mem'ries and for sighs.

I long to clasp thee, little form,
  Up close against my shelt'ring breast,
As if that clasp could shield from harm
  Or give an aching bosom rest.
Oh, *smiling* child, though *mother-reft*,
  I long to smooth thy shining hair,
To feel if angel-mother left
  Her tender, dying kisses there.

Oh laughing eyes! Your joyous gleam
Far more than woe can touch, I ween,
For life was then a flattering dream,
Unshaded by what since hath been.

Smile on, child-face! Thank God, no change
  Can dim the gleam of *thy* bright eye!
The cruel years can ne'er estrange
  Joy from *thy* breast to leave a sigh.
Thou didst not dream, in that gay morn,
  The path thy weary feet should tread,
Nor felt one pang of grief nor scorn,
  Nor saw the clouds o'er thy young head,
Nor shrank from life, the untrod maze,
  Nor sighed for bliss that nevermore
Should greet a wrung heart's anguished gaze
  On earth's dark, raven-haunted shore.

Thank God! Thy face with Hope was bright—
  Thank Him—thy life hath known some joy;
A day that smiled before the night
  A bliss unmixed with grief's alloy.
Thank God! Gay child, thou couldst not know
  The future leaning down to thee—
A future dark with black'ning woe,
  Whose clankless chain must ever be
Around the struggling heart, till Death
  The weary life, in pity, see
In mercy steal the fainting breath
  And set the fettered spirit free.

The Good of Fiction.

Some very mock religious, long-faced, strain-at-gnat-and swallow-camel people pretend to say they don't believe in reading works of fiction.

It feeds the imagination, unfits us for the realities of life, &c., &c. Oh, yes! I know all that by heart; you needn't go any further with the philosophical reasoning lest the effort be too much for you!

Just close your lips as *injured innocenceyfied* as you like. I'm bound to have my say! Now, with your hand on your catechism answer, with due solemnity, these questions.

Don't novels teach us patience? For by reading accounts of those interesting damsels who passed through unheard of difficulties, and closed the chapter by marrying astonishing specimens of masculine perfections,—don't we have more patience to bear *our* troubles, so light by comparison, and don't it give us a sublime faith that we will certainly meet *our* dark-eyed piece of perfection (known as "*fate,*") some time? Don't we learn

how women have lived, loved and suffered? (which latter we, philosophically, resolve *not* to do.) Don't those same works of fiction teach us that "A man may smile and smile again, and be a villain," which important piece of information keeps us on the look out to escape the entertaining fate of a "broken heart." Don't they teach us to be kind to "poor widows," and "helpless orphans." For who knows but that a wealthy uncle or long-lost father or millionaire husband may figure largely in the history of their lives!

Don't they *try* to teach us—('tisn't their fault if they don't,) that *wealth* is "all a fleeting show," and that *fame* is a not-to-be-desired something that imparts no warmth to the heart though it lends brightness to the brow? which latter teachings we sometimes see fit to disregard and persist in believing that wealth *is* convenient; and that *fame is* desirable.

Realities of life! Bah! Don't they force themselves on us fast enough, 'any how'? If we can soar on the wing of fancy, and with imagination's airy brush disengage the wearying dust of *reality* from our souls, and revel in scenes of impossible bliss, how happy are we! What if our beautiful day-dreams do crumble to dust? We enjoyed weaving them—and new ones spring to life over their tombs. Don't rainbows vanish, and blossoms wither—and song-birds perish? But love we them any the less for that?

"Now that the Pain is Gone."

"Now that the pain is gone," I scarce believe
That "foolish picture you and me
Together in that moonlit summer" eve,
Close by that fragrant old rose-tree.

Your hand was on my shoulder; I was dumb
With maddening thoughts that swept my brain,
But you, how calm and cold you spoke the words,
"Farewell! we may not meet again!"

And yet you drew me near and nearer;
How wild I was—I could not speak;
The moonbeams glistened fairer, clearer;
I felt your lips upon my cheek.

"Faintly and slow adown my burning face,"
That trembled half with woe and bliss,
There thrilled—is thrilling yet—will thrill for aye—
That first and unforgotten kiss.

And yet the thrilling now is full of shame—
A bitter scorn that makes me wild
To think that you, with plighted faith, should dare
To trifle with a silly child.

"Now that the pain is gone," the foolish heart,
I once called *broken*, well again,
I'm glad stern Fate decreed that we should part,
Though childish mem'ries haunt my brain.

And yet if I should stand with you as then,
I wonder if your touch would thrill again?
"How strange this is! I think my madness lasts,
Although I'm sure I have forgot the pain."

A Myrtle Reverie.

"I don't think trouble would ever make me go insane."

No, you oyster shell creature, with about as much emotion as a clam, I don't think anything could make you insane! What difference do harsh words and rude neglect make to you? With your thick skull and dull brain you can hardly comprehend the meaning of the words.

You "go insane!" Of course, you couldn't do it any more than a turtle could write poetry. How could *you* understand the passionate agonizing yearnings that a sensitive nature sends forth for love and sympathy? How could you understand the timid shrinking that delicate, high strung natures feel when brought in contact with such "cheaply organized" concerns as yourself?

Oliver W. Holmes says, "Stupidity often saves a person from going mad." *You* are safe! Insanity can never trouble *you* while that impenetrable armor of stupidity surrounds you.

Enough to eat and drink—a place to sleep and

something to wear; and life is all happiness to you. No, not *happiness* either—you no more comprehend that, than you do insanity. You enjoy a kind of stupid content if your animal wants are satisfied—but that thrilling rapture that sensitive minds experience you know nothing about. *You* have no bright fame dreams looming up in the dim distance! You cherish no glorious hopes of future greatness—so, of course, you never felt any pain at seeing your "dearest hopes decay." You never felt the agonizing pain of heart-strings forced rudely from their twining clasp round a loved one. Emotionally speaking, you possess no such article as a heart, and, of course, you experience no suffering from it.

"But my mind is too strong to give way at trouble."

Do you see that huge, unsightly rock that is merely an encumbrance on yon green sward? Well—you may hurl your cane at it with all your strength, and does it move or tumble? But hurl, with half the force, your cane at that exquisitely moulded vase, and it is shattered in a thousand pieces.

Happy creature! *You'll* never go insane. Neither will an oyster!

ON A PICTURE IN THE NEW YORK ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

"The Sentry's Christmas."

"Silence like a gentle river,
Steals along the shores of night,"
And the moonbeams softly quiver
With their "wan and misty light."
Memories sweet, of childhood's gladness,
Haunt my yearning heart and brain,
As I muse beneath the brightness
Of the starlight's golden rain.

Now there comes a vision, mother,
Stealing upwards through my tears,
Of the angel face that brightened
All my boyhood's happy years.
And your eyes seem shining, mother,
In the calm stars overhead,
Like the light from eyes, my mother,
Of a young bride newly wed.

Oh, your parting words, sweet mother,
Haunt my lonely spirit now,
And your last fond kiss is burning
O'er the throbbing of my brow.
Now I fancy gay lights shining
In the distant sweet home-place;
Yet perchance a shadow darkens
Every sweet remembered place.

Shadowed as each wonders, mother,
Where your first-born is to-night,
And perchance a fond prayer flutters
Upward through the moon's wan light.
I am braver now, my mother,
Thinking of that whispered prayer,
E'en though far from *thee*, my mother,
Still I've *God's* protecting care!

With *His* love I'm safe, my mother,
As when in my cradle bed
Soft you laid the tresses, mother,
Of your baby's golden head.
And if I should fall, sweet mother,
Battling for a nation's right,
I shall meet thee, angel mother,
Where there comes no chilling night.

Almost a Romance in Real Life.

It is a fact well known to phrenologists, physiologists and learned pedagogues, that *curiosity* is the predominant organ on feminine heads. This organ was excited to "fever heat," in the little village of B———, by the appearance of a dark-eyed masculine, whose name was—well, the most soaring, romance-inspiring name imaginable, who walked with downcast eyes and folded arms, and a most enormously long face; (of course I don't mean that he used these to aid him in walking; I mean simply that these accompanied him in his walks) who dressed as if his "soul's salvation" depended on the fit of his clothes and the turn of his collar. This interesting gent gave pathetic hints of a "boyish indiscretion," a "stern father," a "princely home," whose walls could "tell a tale" of a "discarded son." Sympathy was excited for the *ci-devant* nobleman, "banker's heir," and nobody knew what all. But in vain, the gossips held a solemn conclave and appointed a committee of investigation to pierce the mystery surrounding him. In vain young ladies brought forth their artillery of

attractions, *i. e.* dimples, ringlets, "beau-catchers," smiles, sighs and tears, to induce this entertaining masculine to yield his heart, and ergo his secret! He remained shrouded in mystery, and his dark lashes drooped more romantically than ever over the *splendor haunting orbs!* "Rural retreats" did not agree with our hero, consequently he became a victim to *ennui.* Something must be done to relieve it. So the clustering locks clustered more bewitchingly than ever round the "marble brow;" fast horses were hired and young ladies received a proposal of marriage. Even the modest, quiet *widows* came in for a share of his "heart and hand." (After much research the former article has not been found.) The consequence of all this "love making" was as might be expected. The poor moon was stared out of countenance by romantic maids and widows. The rates of postage rose on account of the great number of *billets doux* that passed. And yet the history of his life came not! With the patience of Job and the meekness of Moses this astonishing masculine awaited the abatement of "an angry father's wrath," when he (aforementioned hero) would "disclose all," and prove to each and every feminine that she must have been "born under a *lucky star*," or she could never have won the love of ——— (it were profanation to write the name!) The breezes continued to "fan fevered brows;" the dewdrops seemed never to be weary of sparkling on the rose leaves; the clover blossoms

very industriously nodded to the daisies; and the sunshine crept down the long hills to kiss the violets blooming in the valley, and still "fair young creatures" waited patiently, at least *some* of them did, for the wedding day. The *denouement* came at last! Our hero became enraged because one young lady, in a fit of "hope-deferred-maketh-the-heart-sick"-ness, ventured to disclose the very delicate, tender and sentimental soft nonsense with which she had been entertained. Did you ever see the water in a tea-kettle hiss and foam and splutter, and finally boil over? If so, you can form some faint idea of the rage that took possession of aforesaid tastily-gotten-up gent. The public were amazed by the astonishing declaration that with all his "love-making" he "*did not want to marry!*" (The sequel will show *why!*) The "fair young creatures" alluded to, drooped and pined as "old maidism" loomed up frightfully in the dim distance. Widows tore their luxuriant tresses and—bit their finger nails as report brought to their ears the sayings of the interesting mixture of "marble brow," "dark locks," "Lyon's Kathairon," "tight-fitting coat," and prunella gaiters." Actions for damages and "breach of promise" cases were anticipated when a new character appeared, and our mysterious love-making hero proved to be something so unromantic as a *runaway husband!*

"Oh, the sobs that rent the air!
Oh, the sight of torn-out hair!
Oh, the tears that fell like rain!
Oh, the hearts that broke with pain!"

would fill a common sized coffee sack. The organ of caution was tolerably well developed on the cranium of our hero, and the assertion that he "did not want to marry" any of those maids or widows who had beguiled his weary moments, only proved that he considered *bigamy* a dangerous *breach of etiquette* and had not sufficient *daring* to try it! I suppose it is needless to add that the above mentioned injured females have retired from society in disgust!

Indiana.

[Dedicated to W. T. Merrell.]

Sacred soil of Indiana!
  On thy sunny shores are pressed
Homeless feet that flee the terror
  Of Kentucky's wild unrest.
From their homes, proud Indiana,
  Wives and children come to thee,
While the forms their hearts hold dearest,
  "Fight like freemen to be free."

From thy shores, proud Indiana,
  Braves, like Autumn-leaves, have poured,
Seeking death or glory ever
  Where the battle-thunders roared.
Father, son and manly brother
  Pour, a steady ceaseless throng,
While each anguished wife and mother
  Seeks to chime a battle song.

Tries to sing while lips grow paler,
  Weary eyes are dim with tears,

Loving bosoms throb and quiver
With a thousand crushing fears.
Yet thy sons, brave Indiana,
From the battle falter not,
And their life-blood, Indiana,
Makes the field a sacred spot.

Now a nation, Indiana,
Binds thy brow with laurels bright,
Turns her grateful eyes, all tearful,
Where thy noble patriots fight.
Faces fair with mother-kisses,
Eyes too strong for faltering tears,
March to battle brave and steady,
Wearing proudly boyish years.

Golden dreams of joy they buried,
Tender faces bravely left,
And, for Freedom's sacred glory,
Loving hearts and homes were reft.
And the Angels hover o'er them,
Where a mother goeth not,
Bearing up each brave young spirit
Breathed out on the battle-spot.

Noble sons of Indiana!
On to victory and fame,
Ye have crowned your State's fair forehead
With a bright and deathless name.

Yes, a nation, Indiana!
Binds thy brow with laurels bright,
Turns her grateful eyes, all tearful,
Where thy noble patriots fight.

SEPTEMBER 23d, 1862.

Married Men.

Of all the hateful, despisable, conceited, would-be-sarcastic, unbearable *bores*, "married men" are unquestionably the greatest! Trying to be so entrancingly *witty*. Catching up your every remark as if the chief end of their existence was to convince you that your expressions were extremely awkward and their perceptions remarkably *acute*. If you get a letter, they know, at a glance, the postmark, and torment you unmercifully by alluding to it in the presence of masculine friends that you are anxious should imagine you were ignorant of any "admirer's" existence save theirs.

They're always coming into the parlor at the *wrong time;* interrupting your most entertaining discussions on the *human heart*, by some horrid allusion to "Lincoln" or "Jeff Davis." Then, if you retreat to the piazza, just as you are fully launched into an interestingly *sentimental* conversation, your faculties are suddenly paralyzed by the faint odor of a cigar. It comes nearer, and your voice insensibly grows sharp and impatient with

vexation. The spell is broken! The entertaining piece of masculine flesh that you've been laboring to fascinate, looks at you in astonishment as if he didn't know your voice could take so *unpleasant a tone;* and just as you are beginning to realize that a new effort will have to be made ere *the* "proposal" comes, you look up and that horrid bore of a *married man* is just taking a vacant seat near you, as if to more fully accomplish the purpose of suffocating you with cigar smoke. You look at him with an abhorrence which you feel that "*words can never express.*" He takes it calmly and goes on to discuss "probable results of secession." How gladly you would acknowledge *his* "independence," if he'd only secede from that piazza and leave you to help arrange, or rather *agree to* a "*union.*" But although he is "ashamed of KENTUCKY for not *seceding*," yet he has no intention of accommodating you with *his individual* and immediate *secession*, but forces you to acknowledge his *obnoxious* "independence" of your opinion. He expects you to have the forethought, prudence and self-denial of a *woman*, yet treats you with about as much gallantry and consideration as if you were just turning your sixth year. He monopolizes the very seat you wanted and permits you to ride backward, though you have frequently assured him that such a proceeding never fails to give you the headache. Stuffs the newspapers, that you havn't read, in his coat pocket and goes off down town, while you wait impatiently

his return, and force what you fancy is an amiable smile on your countenance as you ask if he has "finished that paper." He tries to frown anxiously, makes a frantic dive into his pocket, then replies, with a horrid grin of half-concealed triumph, that he "actually *left it at the restaurant.*" Shades of Minerva! If you only had the strength to seize him by the shoulders and shake him thoroughly! But you havn't, so what's the use of talking? Still you can't help thinking what a long record you have against that man; and if you should be an *old maid* you know perfectly well at whose door the blame will lie. How often you've started up from a delicious dream of matrimonial bliss, to hear him "wonder if that *baby's mother* can't keep it *quiet,*" and when that "baby's mother" sits down, wearied and worn with trying to keep "baby" and baby's *father quiet*, you look at her and try to contemplate composedly *old maidism.* And when you read his old love-letters that his wife shows you with a kind of bitter, *duped* look, and think of his protestations of *undying affection*, is it any wonder you get disgusted with the whole male tribe and reject "*Fred*" the next day, after counting up, half nervously, the years that must elapse ere you'll be called an "*old maid.*" If you could only jump into *old maidism* as one jumps into a cold bath, it might be borne; but this *gradual* coming on, and that married man's horrid sneers at "vinegar-faced old maids," make you shiver and revolve the question over and over,

"To marry or not to marry." But I might write until the "independence of the SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY" was *acknowledged*, and I could neither change the disposition of "married men" nor convey an idea of what I've suffered from them.

Happy New Year.

"There was a time when I could say the words joyously, hopefully; but now I, Mercy Ellsworth, twenty-five years old, wrinkled and faded, expect no happiness. Hopes all dead—heart frozen—nobody to love me, nobody to care for me!"

A tear fell down on my hand as I spoke thus, one New Year's morning, that now lies back, very far back, in the past. How green and fresh was the memory of a New Year's eight years before, when my dearest friend, Brenda Griffith, came to spend a month with me. Oh, I can almost feel her arms about me now, as they twined themselves when I whispered, in tones that trembled with happiness, the sweet secret of my betrothal to Malcolm Chauncey.

Brenda Griffith! Brenda Griffith! not till the seal of death is on my brow can I forget how you drew me to the mirror and seemed mentally comparing the glorious beauty of your features with my pale, timid face—that Malcolm said was made beautiful by the great brown eyes that flashed over it. *I*

knew it could not be made beautiful; but oh, Malcolm! did I love you any the less for telling me so? No, you must have known that I did not, when I lifted up to you my eyes, that dimmed with tender tears as I listened!

Why need I linger here, e'en though the memory winds of that time, that blow up to me, are very fragrant?

It was with a great deal of pride that I presented Malcolm Chauncey, my betrothed, to Brenda Griffith, my dearest friend. They were each pleased with the other, and I was glad that it was so. Day after day I saw them together; but—Brenda! Brenda! the angels know how I *trusted you!*

The day had gone with solemn footsteps, down to the night when Malcolm Chauncey held my hands in his and said:

"Mercy Ellsworth, until I saw Brenda Griffith, I thought I loved you better than all the earth. Now I know that I have loved you only as a sister, and that I love Brenda Griffith with a love of whose power I never before had a conception! Will you forgive me, Mercy darling, and be my little sister?"

Malcolm Chauncey, the face that grew stern with despairing woe, as I lifted it up to your searching eyes, you thought very calm and indifferent when my lips said:

"I will be your sister, Malcolm Chauncey!"

The kiss that dropped down on my forehead was very tender, as you whispered:

"God bless you, Mercy darling—*sister!*"

It's a sweet name, Malcolm, but not the name you promised to call me, and for which my soul so yearned! I woke very early the next morning, and, standing by my window, I saw Malcolm Chauncey leaving the house. So he was going without one farewell to me—me, who loved him better than life!

"Have you no word of farewell for me, Malcolm?" My voice was strangely calm as I stole to his side unperceived.

"Mercy, Mercy, I am wretched indeed! Pity me, little sister!"

His tones floated down to my heart, striking mournful echoes. I knew it all then; Brenda had refused him! The thoughts were very bitter that entered my soul, and framed the image of Brenda Griffith—once set there so tenderly.

"God will help you to bear it, Malcolm," I whispered. There was a quivering kiss dropped down on my forehead, a great warm tear on my cheek, and then he was gone!

I will not tell you how I upbraided Brenda, my *false, false friend;* nor how she replied, with cold, sneering taunts. Had she loved Malcolm, I believe I could have forgiven her for winning him from me; but to make two lives miserable merely to gratify her inordinate love of flirting, seemed more than I could forgive. So she, too, left me, and my life seemed going deeper into the shadow. Two years afterward, father and mother both died, and I

was left alone in the grey cottage where I was born. There I lived until my life went out to meet its twenty-fifth birthday. I sat thinking of it all that morning, and my heart seemed all darkness, because not set with the "radiant jewel Love." Very rebelliously throbbed my heart, and the sunshine of the "happy new year" stole in at the window, as if to brighten the room—that, seen through my tears, seemed very dull and misty. There was a hasty knock on the door, and glancing out of the window, I saw that the stage had stopped before the gate.

"Does Miss Mercy Ellsworth live here?" asked a short, thick man, as I opened the door.

"Yes," I replied.

Without waiting another moment, he walked briskly back to the stage, and jerking the door open, lifted out a little girl apparently about six years old.

"I was with Mrs. Ashley, mum, when she died." he said, addressing me, "and she sold the very bed she died on to get money to send her child to you.

"Mrs. Ashley? Mrs. Ashley?" said I, thinking there was some mistake.

"Yes, yes," returned the man, half impatiently. "She said you and she were girls together; and here's a letter she sent you," he concluded, producing one from the depths of his great coat pocket, as he loosened the child's grasp from his and turned briskly away.

"Come in," I said, mechanically holding out my

hand to the child; for one glance into her face told me who it was that had sent her unto me.

Who ever had such dark, glorious eyes, such a wealth of raven ringlets, such a small, curved mouth, that sent sunny smiles drifting away 'mid the dimples of the soft, rosy cheeks? None other than *Brenda Griffith.* And the letter I held in my trembling fingers looked up in my face pleadingly. Yet I laid it softly down, and warmed and fed the orphan child ere I broke the seal of her mother's letter, and read:

"Mercy Ellsworth, Mercy Ellsworth! your name rings up through my heart with a reproach keener than the winter winds that will soon blow harshly round my orphan child. You loved me once, Mercy, and God knows I loved you; but in an evil hour, when my good angel had spread her snowy wings and floated afar off, I resolved to win from you the light of your life. I cannot write of this now, Mercy Ellsworth; you know it all—alas, how bitterly! But, by the memory of those innocent days of our childhood, ere the tempter came, when I was *truly* your *friend*, I pray you be merciful to me in this, my dying hour. It is strange I should ask such a thing, and yet 'tis because *I know you so well* that I dare say—Mercy Ellsworth, take my orphan child and be a mother unto her, and may God be merciful to you according as you deal with the child of BRENDA ASHLEY."

So I took the child that came to me that New

Year's morning, and resolved to be very patient and loving. All the wrong that her mother had done unto me I buried; and as it is easier to love one who has wronged us than one we have wronged, my heart turned with its olden tenderness toward the memory of Brenda, and I tried to forget how she had shadowed my life.

Brenda Ashley, the child, had a great deal of her mother's disposition. I could see it in the proud curve of her beautiful lip, in the coquettish toss of her small Grecian head, in the arch glancing of her glorious eyes. She had a pretty, affectionate way, that was very winning, even though you felt that it lacked the warmth and real feeling usually found in childhood. Yet, for that gay-voiced child, over the withered branches of my soul blossomed a new love, that was very fragrant and tender. I think she returned it in some measure—that is, she loved me as well as her thoroughly selfish nature would allow her to love any one. I think she was at least grateful for my kindness.

She attended the village school until she was fourteen years old; then she wished to attend a fashionable boarding school. When I gave my consent, she threw her arms about me and said:

"Oh, Aunt Mercy! how can I ever repay you for being so kind to me?"

The beautiful flushed face upturned to mine reminded me of another Brenda, whose soft arms had circled round me so oft—and thinking of it, the sharp, bitter pleading broke up from my heart:

"*Love me*, Brenda! only *love me!*"

"Oh, Aunty, I do love you!" she answered; but I knew, from her look and tones, that 'twas not the deep, tender, abiding, self-sacrificing love for which my soul so panted. In a moment more she was talking of dresses and bonnets, and a thousand other things that she would need, and "*must have.*" There were a few weeks of preparations, and then, in the same old stage-coach that brought her to me eight years before, she departed with a gay-spoken "Good-bye, Aunt Mercy!" and I, the desolate woman, turned back with gaze grown dim from very tenderness. She was all I had to love, and no wonder the house seemed desolate without her.

Occasionally there came dainty, hurried epistles, with a word now and then of endearment, to preface a request. Then vacation, when the bright creature came home, bringing gay companions, with whom time would not drag so heavily as Brenda said it did when she had nothing but the "flowers and Aunt Mercy's mournful brown eyes."

I determined to be patient and loving, so that on the last day, when our grave-clothes rustled 'gainst each other, I could say: "Brenda, I have *tried* to be a mother unto the child whom thou didst give me!" The years wore on, and while the life of Brenda Ashley blossomed up to its womanhood, mine drifted down deeper 'mid the shadows of despair, and the world called me an "old maid." Even Brenda asked me how it came to be so; but I could not tell her.

'Twas when her seventeenth birthday had come silently down from the future, to meet her, that Brenda Ashley was pronounced "finished" by her teachers. Yes, she could paint, and draw, and sing, and waltz, and do a thousand other things. She had learned a great many lessons, but among them all had she learned one of patience, of meekness, or self-denial?

She had read numberless novels of life's "trials and triumphs," but when I fain would tell her again the sweet story of divine love, she said pettishly: "Oh, auntie, it's so dull! Please don't talk to me of it!"

She had been home about two months, when she received a letter from her mother's sister, who had "just learned where she was—attended the school examination, and was very proud that her niece had acquitted herself so triumphantly, and would be pleased to have her visit New York, and spend the ensuing winter."

Brenda was in ecstacies.

"Oh, auntie! it will be so nice!" said she, seeming to take my consent for granted.

"I don't know, Brenda," said I, "you will lead so gay a life that I fear you will wander further from Him who died for you!"

In an instant the bright face was clouded, and she said pettishly,

"Oh, Aunt Mercy, you can't *make* me religious. The Lord only can do that, and if he don't see fit

to turn my heart, I think you'd just as well let it alone."

I knew that further words were unnecessary, and yet they came into my heart, and my lips spoke them—"Lead us not into temptation."

"Now, dear auntie, there'll be no more temptation there for me to do wrong, than there is here, for after I have seen the follies of fashionable society, I shall learn to despise it?" said Brenda, while over her face swept a shade of determination that I knew no arguments could remove. So it was decided that she should go. I did not dread being alone now as I had done even though in solitude the wings of many haunting memories shadowed my heart.

The golden and purple splendors of autumn hung over the hills, when I received a letter from Brenda, that she was going to be married. It was thus she wrote of it:

"Aunt Mercy, I am going to surprise you, and perhaps vex you a little, for not first asking your consent, but I knew you couldn't withhold it, so I didn't wait to ask. *I am going to be married!* Every one says it will be a "splendid match." To be sure my affianced is nearly forty, but he's handsome, affectionate and, oh, auntie, *so rich.* Your little Brenda will live like a queen, and be so happy! Aunt Fannie wants you to come on immediately. My *trousseau* will be superb!"

I leaned down my head and wept as there came

unto me a vision of a shattered dream of happiness that once beckoned me on joyously to the future. How different was my glorious love-dream from the glittering ambition-dream of Brenda Ashley.

I found Brenda in a state of excitement almost bordering on distraction. She, the dependent orphan to be suddenly elevated to rank and wealth. 'Twas too much happiness to her ambitious nature.

"But you haven't told me his name, Brenda," said I.

"Haven't I? Well, I'll declare," she laughed. "It's Chauncey—Malcolm Chauncey."

From the uttermost depths of my soul came a groan that I could not repress, and then I fainted. They attributed it to my journey, and said, "the fatigue was too much for me." Yes, my soul was very weary, but its longing eyes looked vainly for rest. I met Malcolm Chauncey very calmly, that he might not suspect that I loved him with a love deeper than the calm, sisterly affection that he had requested me to have in the far back "long ago."

'Twas a week before Christmas that I sat alone in the drawing room. Brenda was to be married on New Year's night, and I sat thinking of it. So absorbed was I in my reverie that I was not aware of the entrance of Malcolm Chauncey until he stood close beside me. His face was pale and the voice husky that said,

"Will you read this, Mercy?"

I bowed assent as he handed me a letter, one

glance at which told me 'twas Brenda's writing, and these were the words she had traced,

"MA CHÈRE JULIE: If at any period of my life I have murmured at the decrees of that accommodating person, familiarly known as Fate, I do assure you that at this moment I realize the folly of having so done. But you're impatient: Well, prepare yourself for a startling disclosure. *I am going to be married in about two weeks.* Julie, chère, every one says he's "the greatest catch of the season." *I* should say for several "seasons." Don't make another such a grimace as that, for I tell you he is rich, and all the girls are dying for him.

"By the way, there's almost a romance connected with his history. You know I've always lived with an old maid whom I call 'Aunt Mercy.' Well, when she was young, she was betrothed to Mr. Chauncey, and he fell in love with my mother, who, of course, didn't want him, as he was poor then, and so he left for 'parts unknown,' and it seems Aunt Mercy has loved him ever since.

"There, haven't I epitomized what might be woven into an entertaining romance. Now of course you're asking, 'How did you find it out, Brenda?' Patience, *ma chère!* I went into Aunt Mercy's room the other day, and found her trunk unlocked. Now I knew that she always kept a journal, and I remembered how she fainted when I told her his name. So into the trunk I dived,

and after some little search found the journal. I wish you could read it. I declare it made me cry, and so worked upon my sympathies that I was almost tempted to give up Mr. Chauncey to her, thereby making a heroine of myself; but, fortunately, 'common sense' stepped in and saved me. So I slipped the journal quietly back, and kept my own counsel, yet I did feel so sorry for Aunt Mercy when I saw her watching Mr. Chauncey so wistfully when he didn't know it. I wish I could love him as she does, but—"

The sentence was not finished, yet I could guess the rest.

"Is it true, Mercy? Do you love me?"

The face that shone down on me was very pale and eager.

"Why do you ask, Malcolm? Why do you ask?" said I, as my tears dropped down on the letter of Brenda Ashley.

"Because I love you, Mercy Ellsworth."

I do not believe that if a shining-robed angel from the far above had whispered to me admittance to the "holy land," my heart could have throbbed to wilder bliss than it did when the words, "*Because I love you, Mercy Ellsworth!*" dropped down on the brow of my soul, and set it with radiant gems.

"It is true, Malcolm!" I spoke the words very softly, but he heard them, and folding me close in his arms, just as he had done years before, he whispered,

"Mercy, my beloved, God has been merciful unto me."

For a time we two sat very still, and there was no word spoken between us, but our tears dropped down soft and warm as summer rain.

"All my life, Mercy, my heart had felt its need of love," he said at length,

"Years ago, I loved you truly, deeply, but the glorious beauty of Brenda Griffith infatuated me, and she first made me believe that I loved you only as a sister. The wild passion I felt for her I called *love*. 'Twas *not love*, my darling, but I knew it not then. I was almost maddened by her cruel rejection, and tried to forget it in the busy world. I devoted all my energies to amassing wealth, but as the years wore on, my life cried out in its loneliness for love. I met your niece, and though I could not love her, yet I was flattered by her evident preference for me, and so I proposed linking my life with her radiant girlhood. When I saw you I felt the old tenderness rushing over me, but I was betrothed; and you greeted me so calmly that I could not think you loved me other than as a brother, so I did not seek to revive the affection which I once cherished for you. Last evening, Brenda's maid, who you know can read and write, brought me this letter. I suppose she became offended with her mistress, and took this method of revenge. Now, Mercy, my beloved, I know that you are the only woman whom I have ever

loved—with a love on which the angels smile. Will you be my wife?"

And in the solemn hush of the twilight, I answered,

"I will be your wife, Malcolm Chauncey."

Of course, Brenda and her aunt were very indignant, but they were somewhat mollified when Malcolm settled on Brenda a comfortable income. Two years afterward she married a wealthy fop, and I suppose lived very happily with him. Two weeks after I had promised to be the wife of Malcolm Chauncey, we were married; and oh, the boughs of my soul blossomed over with hope and happiness, and swayed joyously as they welcomed the "*Happy New Year!*"

Song of other Days.

There was a time, in hours gone by,
When lightest tone from thee could bring
The flash of gladness to mine eye;
And o'er my cheek the roses fling.

There was a time my inmost soul
Thrilled wildly at a glance from thee;
And heart, and brain, and being, all
Joined in one joyous revelry.

There was a time one face, one form
Forever haunted dreams of mine—
Ah! in those happy days, now gone,
The face, the form I lov'd, was *thine*.

Thy name—it was a cherished word,
I thought thee then a *millionaire*,
But, ah! how soon we parted when
I found thee but a *baker's heir!*

My Heart's Story.

All night long the Autumn rain-drops
  Beat against my window-pane,
While my heart throbbed out its story
  In the pauses of the rain.
And along the misty uplands,
  Shadowed in my soul and dim,
Rang a low and plaintive music
  Like a dying mother's hymn

When she leaves her heart's best jewels
  In the loveless world alone,
When she listens half to angels,
  Half to bleeding hearts that moan;
Yes, I listened to the rain-drops
  Beating 'gainst my window-pane,
Thought I how they knocked to enter,
  Knocked the dreary night *in vain.*

So I knocked, oh form I worshipped,
  Knocked with aching heart and brain,

Yet knocked at thy soul's stern portals,
Vainly as the Autumn-rain.
For a gentle blue-eyed vision,
Fairer, lovelier than mine,
Haunted all the dreaming moments
And the waking hours of thine.

When I listened to her praises,
Spoken in the Summer time,
Oh, they struck upon my life-chords
Like a pealing funeral chime—
Striking out the joy and beauty,
Quenching all its golden light,
Till my heart was like a valley
In a bleak December night;

Save no star-beams wandered o'er it,
Bending from a sky of blue—
No, 'twas dark and cold and cheerless,
With its mantling Upas dew.
When the roses dropped their petals,
Fragrant with a dewy red,
Then thy dainty blue-eyed vision
Slumbered with the early dead.

And my love too faded slowly,
Like a trembling morning star,
When the daylight comes in beauty
Through a crimson Eden-bar—

Faded, for *no dead love's ashes*
Will my soul take for a crown,
And my heart holds one more gravestone
'Mid its shadows dim and brown.

My Sister Nellie.

"Put your arm around me once more and press your kisses on my cheek, little sister, for I may never come back to you any more."

It was my sister Nellie that spoke thus one autumn morning, and the tears dropped down on my forehead as the words died out from her lips. She folded me close in her arms, and the light of her beautiful eyes shone down on my face like the far off radiance of summer stars.

"Oh, Nellie, Nellie, you will come back to us, I know. Don't cry. They will be kind to you, and you will be making so much money," I said, as I put my arms around her and nestled my cheek on her bosom.

"Money—yes, money. You, my darling, will try very hard to learn music and painting, now we shall have money to pay for your instruction," and Nellie's eyes looked fondly down on me with a mournfulness that told of the great trial she was undergoing for my sake.

"Yes, Nellie, I will learn so fast, and then I can

teach, too. I'll improve so much you'll hardly know me in a year," I answered, for I knew there was no way to console her half so effectual as the speaking of my own improvement.

"A year, darling—yes, a whole year to listen vainly for loving tones and familiar footfalls. Pray for me, sister," said she in a sweet voice, tremulously.

"Our Father who art in Heaven," were the words in my heart, but, though they struggled for utterance, my sobs choked them. A moment her hands were clasped, the tearful eyes raised upward, while the trembling lips murmured inaudible words that I knew were a petition for help. A long last kiss and Nellie, darling sister, was borne from us to be a governess in the family of a Southern planter, who knew not how much of our hearts went out to his stately palace with Nellie.

* * * * * *

"Cannot I bear a little for your dear sakes, who are all I have on earth, when Jesus, our Saviour, suffered crucifixion for the salvation of those who persecuted Him unto death? Darling sister, pray for me, that I faint not by the wayside, but 'hold out faithful to the end.'" And so her letter closed —a long letter, wherein she had poured out her full heart to her loved ones.

The proud, timid spirit was tortured almost beyond endurance by the petty tyranny of a woman of fashion, who had the power that gold, potent

gold, can give. The letter was delayed so long that I did not get it until two weeks after it was written. That night I sobbed myself to sleep thinking of Nellie.

The autumn sunshine streaming in at my window, and the shrill voice of my pet canary led me out from the dim dream-land where, with clasped hands, I had been talking with sister Nellie.

We had just seated ourselves at the breakfast-table, when our cottage door echoed a quick, sharp knock. I sprang to it and received a telegram. A great fear knocked loudly at the door of my heart as my father broke the seal. The paleness of death crept over his face and he clutched a chair for support.

"What is it, father?" brother and I asked, as he gazed at us in agony.

"Nellie—insane!" were the two words his white lips gasped out—the two words that made earth all darkness to us. Oh, trembling fingers made hasty preparations for father's journey to our darling; and brother and I gazed out on the autumn sunshine, and waited desolately for news from Nellie. It came at last. They told us she was "insane on the subject of religion!" That her lips repeated promise after promise of God's protection, that her heart had cherished, for consolation, in her great loneliness. While ever and anon her crushed heart sent out the desolate moan, "Father! sister! brother!—where are you?"

We went hastily—and strangers stood round and looked on Nellie—*dead.* They only knew that a pair of gentle grey eyes were closed in death; two soft dainty lips lying together in one long, loving kiss; two pale, small hands folded over a stilled heart; and the golden brown hair resting on the white temples that would never again throb wearily or beat joyously. To them it was only a stranger, dead in the full bloom of womanhood! To us it was *Nellie*—our Nellie lying there with the death dews on her brow, and the sweet voice forever hushed.

Oh! my darling! Kings might envy thee thy calm sleeping—thy glorious immortality—thy home in Heaven!

Where the Purple Shadows Sleep.

Where the purple shadows sleep
In the twilight's misty gloom,
Where the winds are searching vainly
For the Summer's vanished bloom,
'Neath the starlight's solemn splendors
Is a lone, neglected tomb.

Now the night-birds flutter o'er it
With their broken, quivering wings;
Broken, bleeding, torn and trembling,
Weary of earth's mocking things—
Weary of the moon that shudders
With the mournful light she flings.

Weary of the snow-crowned mountains,
Bright, yet cold and frozen things,
Weary of the day that ever
To the night her glory brings;
Weary—yes, like the pale sleeper,
Weary of earth's mocking things.

Weary of the dim old forests,
With their shadows dark and deep,
Weary of the winds that murmur
Like a restless child asleep,
When the night with mournful stillness
Vigils o'er the earth doth keep.

Like the birds with broken pinions
Fluttering in the purple shade,
O'er my mother, in the forest,
Where her faded bloom is laid—
So I'm sitting, angel-mother,
Watching mournful daylight fade.

Wond'ring, mother, why you left me
When my heart was aching so,
Broken, bleeding, fainting, quivering,
With its bitter weight of woe—
With its mem'ries wild and haunting,
Of a vanished "long ago."

To a Jealous "Friend."

Thou art jealous! 'Tis no wonder,
  Changing, fickle as thou art,
That thou hast no faith in others
  Judging all by thy own heart.

Drifting winds upon the mountain,
  Fickle foam upon the sea,
Bursting bubbles on the fountain
  One might sooner trust than thee.

Talk of "*Love!*" Let valleys whisper
  Of the far off eagle's nest;
Let the storm that rages wildly
  Tell us of its calm and rest.

Let the darkness talk of sunlight,
  Let the vulture wed the dove,
But of all things most unlikely
  Is the thought that *thou* couldst *love.*

Thou?—weak changing, fickle trifler.
Bah! The puny phantom-light
Of *thy* "loving" flits before me
Like a mist upon the night.

Passion-words thou, too, canst utter,
Bright and strange as tropic birds;
Well, perchance thy "heart *doth* flutter
With the burden of its"—*words!*

They are all thou hast to offer.
How I pity thee, and scorn
Such a "love" as *thou* couldst proffer,
Of a silly fancy born.

Force thy way, oh, petty trifler,
Into every generous heart,
Thou wilt win a moment's smiling
Till each sees thee as *thou art.*

Thou may'st win a moment's trifling
From the heartless and the gay
Thou may'st make thy useless living
Vanish like a Summer day.

But when roses blossom, trifler,
O'er the paleness of thy face,
Who will wander calm and prayerful
To thy quiet resting place,

There to whisper—"Best Beloved"—
None may speak thy cherished name
With a word of bitter memory,
With a thought of *truthful blame?*

Thou may'st hear some words of loving
As thou givest vow for vow,
But the maid will love a fancy
Truer, tenderer than thou.

No deep soul, with honest yearning,
No far-seeing, faithful heart,
E'er will keep its lights all burning
For thee, fickle as thou art.

If one loves, 'twill be *a fancy*
Tricked and painted out for thee
In thy *true guise*, petty trifler,
Worshipped, thou canst never be!

Dudley Graham.

"Dudley Graham! What a pretty name!" The speaker was a young girl about fifteen years of age. Very pretty she looked, with the glittering fingers of the sunshine resting on her curls; and the Spring breezes kissing the crimson of her dimpled cheeks.

"Tell me all about him, Robert," she continued, addressing a youth, who stood near.

"You know I'm not good at word portraits—but I'll bring him up this evening," returned the youth, moving off.

"Will you, Robert? Oh! you dear, good boy!" and she entered a little gate that led to the pretty brown cottage where she lived. Robert Harwood was nineteen years old, and surely goodness and intellect were never more united in one person than in him. Jennie Mayburn tripped lightly to the house with her young heart full of Dudley Graham; but Robert Harwood moved slowly down the main street of the little village and thought of Jennie, blue-eyed Jennie Mayburn.

"I'm lame," he murmured. "She can never love me, but Dudley Graham, with his handsome form

and bounding step, can win what all my life I've longed for. He will not prize the rich treasure, but *I*, oh," and the boy ended the sentence with a mute prayer for strength. As only such natures can love, Robert loved Jeanette Mayburn, and she saw it not, *prized* it not. Ah! many a sweet cup of happiness is held to our lips, and we cast it aside as unworthy —while other draughts we quaff so eagerly, finding *too* late the bitter and gall at the bottom. And now I'll tell you of Dudley Graham. His form was tall and graceful; his eyes were dark, "splendor haunting," eyes that were shadowed by short, jetty clusters of curls. He had a merry, off-hand way that was very fascinating; and yet, there was no nobility of heart or mind in his composition—brilliant, fascinating, *unprincipled*, are the three words that describe him.

Robert Harwood saw with pain the growing intimacy between Jeanette Mayburn and Dudley Graham; but whenever he attempted to check it, she'd say "Pshaw! Robert, you're jealous!" and then a proud, painful flush would sweep over the brow of the boy, and his heart would give great cries of anguish, though his lips told no tale of what was passing within. But there were times when the voiceless starlight heard the yearning tenderness of his tones, as they spoke the words in midnight dreams, "*Jennie, darling Jennie!*"

"Robert, you've always called me 'little sister,' haven't you?"

The young face was radiant with the light of a great happiness.

"Yes, little sister," repeated Robert Harwood, smoothing her curls.

"Well, if I'm your sister, I ought to tell you *everything*, oughtn't I?" Jennie Mayburn asked, nestling closer to him.

"Yes, *everything*," answered the boy, still twisting her curls and thinking how very happy it would make him if she'd only tell him *one* thing—that she loved him.

"Well, hide your eyes, Robert, till I tell you"—the pretty pink fingers were pressed tight over his eyes, and Jennie's crimson lips rested against his ear, and whispered—"I'm engaged, Robert, *to Dudley Graham!*" The paleness of death overspread the face of Robert Harwood, and, tearing her hands fiercely from his eyes, he gazed with a wild stare of mute anguish into her blushing face. "Don't Robert. What ails you? What makes you look at me so?" and alarm took the place of embarrassment on the face of Jeanette Mayburn.

A hollow laugh broke from the white lips of Robert Harwood, as he said:

"Look at you so? Look how?"

"Oh, Robert, you frighten me! I'm your little sister, ain't I?"

The girl nestled closer to him, as if a faint perception of the truth dawned on her mind, and she would fain comfort him.

"Yes, my little sister," Robert answered, in a cold, mechanical tone, but over his soul surged wild waves of tenderness more passionate, perhaps, because they must roll on through all eternity, meeting no return. "Good-bye, Jennie," he said, rising to leave her.

"Good-bye, Robert," said Jeanette Mayburn, unconscious of the great jewel that she was passing by, unheeded, for a worthless, tinsel thing, the love of Dudley Graham.

"*Not my will, Father, but thine be done,*" was the lame boy's prayer, as he leaned heavily on his cane.

My heart aches for thee, Robert Harwood; and yet, who shall say, that in that hour pure wings of unseen angels did not hover over thee, helping thee to bear thy great grief?

"Oh! Robert, Robert, how can I bear it?"

The tone was full of passionate wretchedness. Robert Harwood looked down pityingly into the face of Jeanette Mayburn.

"Oh, Dudley, Dudley! how could I think you would ever be false to me?" moaned the girl, gazing down at the paper that contained a notice of his marriage.

"Jennie, my poor darling!" were the words that came with such mournful tenderness from the lips of Robert Harwood. Too well *he* knew the pain of

loving *unloved*, and he soothed her tenderly, as a mother soothes a grieved child.

The sunset tinged with crimson, dyed the faces of the two that sat all unconscious of its glory—each suffering the same pang *loving* and being *unloved*. And yet Jennie Mayburn thou wert loved by one of the most noble natures that ever existed, and thou didst not prize that which would have made thy life a joy and a perfection.

"Jennie, Jennie, you won't break your heart for Dudley Graham, will you?" Robert Harwood leaned anxiously forward for her answer.

"Break my heart for him? I guess I won't!" said the girl, springing to her feet; and a flash of proud determination came out from her eyes and crimsoned her cheeks, while her lips curved scornfully; yet they trembled, and tears glittered in her proud eyes. She had a *woman's* heart, and it ached with the burial of her great love. A moment she stood with the light of the Autumn skies bathing her in purple glory—then she covered her face with her hands and sobbed out all her pride in tears.

"Jennie, Jennie, little darling, my heart aches for you."

The tones were full of compassion; and Jeannette Mayburn must have felt it, for she said, with a voice full of sorrowful gratitude,

"My brother Robert."

Her companion winced and shrank farther from her. It was always *brother*, he thought, as if to

remind him he could be nothing more. There was a silence of some moments, and then Robert Harwood said, in a low tone that seemed as if every word was some portion of his heart being breathed out:

"Jennie, if I were not lame, could you love me. Would you be my wife?"

Jeanette Mayburn started back and looked with mute surprise on the pale face beside her. Then she realized how noble a nature poured out its love for her.

"Oh, Robert," she murmured, "I'm not worthy of you!"

"Jennie, I know you cannot love me as you have loved Dudley Graham; but he has proved himself unworthy of you. You cannot link your life with his; and if you'll be my wife, I'll try to make you happy."

The beautiful eyes of Robert Harwood were full of hopeful tenderness as he bent over for an answer. It was some moments ere Jennie replied, and then she said:

"I love you only as a brother; but you are good, and true, and noble. I will try to make you happy —I will be your wife, Robert Harwood."

From quivering lips went up, through the Autumn twilight, the words, "My Father, I thank thee." Jeanette Mayburn heard them. Then she murmured, in true humility,

"Robert, Robert, I'm not worthy of you. Pray God to make me so."

"My darling! my darling!" was the only answer that a heart full to overflowing could give.

The starlight filled the path where the purple sunset had trod, ere they parted—one to dream of love, and joy and Jennie Mayburn—the other to moan, passionately, "Dudley, Dudley, would I had died ere this."

Ah! Jeanette Mayburn, could thy heart have grasped what it yearned for, then, indeed, might despair have crowned thy soul with darkness. God was good to thee, Jennie, but thou didst know it not—and I'm sorry for thee because thou did'st not."

It was a Spring morning when the trees were full of song-birds, and the violets full of sunbeams. Jennie Mayburn was Jennie Harwood now, and the wings of five years had swept over her since we last saw her.

"Wonder if Robert won't be home to-day?" she said, as she picked up the morning paper. A moment her eyes wandered to the spring flowerets, and before her mental vision rose a face that in years gone by was shrined in the most sacred chamber of her heart—a face that even now caused a half regretful sigh—the face of Dudley Graham.

"I know Robert is the best man in the world. If I could only love him as I loved Dudley Graham, how happy it would make me," sighed Jennie.

"Ah, a *trifle* when *lost* will oft take a charm divine,
But *possession* dims the diamond's shine."

So it was with you, Jennie Harwood, but you knew it not. How soon the awakening came! On the first page of the morning journal was an account of a wife-murderer and the name was *Dudley Graham.*

"Oh, my Father! I thank thee! Oh, have mercy upon me!" moaned Jeanette Harwood. In that hour rose, reproachfully, before her the life-long devotion of Robert, her husband, and she realized that her affection for Dudley Graham had been a passion—a mad infatuation—and that she felt *true love* for none other than Robert Harwood.

Jennie did not take up the paper again until late in the evening. Then the first words she read struck a chill of terror to her heart, "Explosion of the steamer Snow Bird." *Robert had written that he would come home in that boat.* With a mighty effort she read on. In the list of the dead was the name "*Robert Harwood.*" A long, loud shriek pierced the twilight air, and Jeanette Harwood fell senseless to the floor. A severe illness followed. But God was merciful. Slowly she came back to life, and hope and happiness to find it a cruel mistake. *Robert Harwood was living* to be happy in her love.

To Albert.

When the Winter winds are sobbing
  Through the forests dim and brown,
And the earth puts off the glory
  Of gay Autumn's radiant crown,
Then, oh, Albert! I'll be sleeping
  Where the mystic shadows tread,
Gently, as if not to waken
  Quiet slumbers of the dead.

Softly folded from the sorrow
  That my dreary earth-life knew,
I will wait until the angels
  Tell thee, Albert, *I was true;*
'Till they roll aside the gateway,
  Built between my heart and thine;
'Till they lead us both beloved,
  Where eternal waters shine.

'Till they tell thee how I loved thee,
  Even though thy cruel words,

Fluttered ever through my memory,
  Like some broken pinioned birds!
In the solemn night-time, Albert,
  Through the cold, estranging years,
Will there come a vision, dearest,
  Floating upward on thy tears—

Of a young face bright and glowing,
  With love's rosy, radiant light,
Such as slept upon my features
  Ere my life had known its night!
Wilt thou wander, oh, beloved,
  With a pitying, tender moan,
To the grave where I am sleeping,
  With the grasses overgrown?

Do not dread to come, oh, Albert,
  To my lonely resting place—
For the clover buds will cover
  From thy sight my anguished face;
Thou wilt see no "white hands lifted
  Out and upward from the gloom,"
Thou wilt hear no wild upbraiding,
  Stealing from my lonely tomb.

No, I'll lie with pale lids drooping
  O'er the eyes that once were bright,
As they shone upon thee, Albert,
  With a tender heart's soft light.

And the hands that used to tremble
'Neath the pressure of thy own,
Will be folded very softly,
O'er a broken heart's hushed moan.

"To One who Sang of Love."

PARODY.

Thou hast sung of love's confession,
  Sung with speaking, soul-lit eyes,
While I, darling, dreamed of rapture,
  To be found in apple pies!
Dreamed I of them brown and juicy,
  Sweet and pleasant to the taste,
And I wondered, dark-eyed poet,
  If you'd call those pies "a waste!"

If you'd think sugar expensive,
  Grumbling loudly at its use,
When around our necks, oh darling,
  Was the matrimonial noose.
Thought of eggs and butter, dearest,
  Needed for my favorite cake;
And, forgive me, but I wondered
  If you knew *how much* 'twould take!

And, when knowing, if you'd grumble
  That I loved to eat so well!

Ah, my tears were falling, dearest,
Dreaming of a "broken spell."
Answer then, oh spirit-mate,
Keep me not in this suspense,
If we marry, tell me, darling,
Will you grumble at "expense?"

"Cannot a Man Smile, and Smile, and be a Villain."

To be sure he can! Can't he smile enchantingly, and talk sensibly, and look altogether killingly, irresistible, for the laudable purpose of making unfortunate females wake themselves up way in the night screaming out his name to surrounding *snorers?* Can't he wear enchanting dickeys, and bewitching boots, and flourish graceful canes, and heavenly moustaches, and do all manner of entertaining things charmingly, that poor feminines may labor under the absurd hallucination that they're in love with him; and he may find it out and grow eloquent over his own attractions? Yes, sir, and that isn't half that he can do. Can't he make love to you, (I'm addressing the crinoline population now,) and roll up his eyes, and beat his breast, and gaze at the moon, and wring his hands, and get down on his knees and spout Byron, and finally prove to be either "engaged" to some little milk-faced thing that you despise, or else the interesting

husband of some half dozen deluded females who each imagines that she, *alone*, is entitled to the enormous article under his left vest pocket? Can't he travel under all manner of romantic assumed names, and write poetry, and sing "Meet me by Moonlight," and clasp your hand tenderly, and gaze in your eyes bewilderingly; and vow eternal constancy, and get you to burn his letters while he *keeps yours;* and finally, be "astonished how easily women are gulled?" I "pause for a reply."

In Memory of Effie N. Wintersmith,

AGED FOUR YEARS.

April blooms are drooping
  Fragrance o'er the earth,
Birds are singing gaily
  Songs of love and mirth;
Flowers in the valley
  Scent the April air,
Skies are blue and sunny,
  Earth *seems* very fair.

But the flowers are mocking,
  Pale the early bloom,
Naught can shed a brightness
  Over EFFIE'S tomb;
Yet the blooms are fragrant
  In the "mystic lands,"
Where sweet EFFIE wanders
  Led by angel hands.

Strew the flowers gently
  O'er the fair young head

"She is only sleeping"—
"EFFIE" is not dead.
Weep not for your darling,
All earth's gloom is o'er,
And she waits *to meet you*
On "the other shore."

Yes, amid the lilies
Of the upper world,
With her robes of gladness,
And her wings unfurled,
Little EFFIE wanders
Through that land of light,
In "Our Father's" mansion,
Beautiful and bright.

Written in a Bride's Journal.

Your journal! Of course you will bid farewell to it, and all other romantic or sentimental ideas now. How often you've bent over it with the tear-drops coming up from your heart and raining down your cheeks! How often you've bent over it, and traced joyous words as you listened to happy heart-beats! And now, as you read it over, you seem almost to retrace the paths you have trod since you began your "journal." It is perfectly useless to you now, and its few blank pages will remain unwritten—for there'll be no more romantic dreams or *declarations of love*, torturing doubts, agonizing suspense, or joyous love-dreams to record! For if you have any heart-stirring love-dreams—of course you, a married woman, would not be guilty of writing them down like a silly, moon-struck girl. There are blissful anticipations of future happiness filling your soul, and your eyes long, with a joyous eagerness, to read the record of your future life; and you're dreaming fondly of a strong arm thrown around you to shield you from rude storms round

earth's pathway. A faithful bosom to lean your head against as you listen to the musical throbbing of loving heart-beats. An intellect that can guide, direct, and improve your own; to bear you company through the pearl gates, etc., etc. I sincerely hope, my friend, you may realize those happy scenes hope pictures now so vividly.

Now, after all that sentimental stuff is done with, let me give you a little piece of wholesome advice. Bundle all your romance up, and scatter it to the "four winds of the earth!" Give up writing poetry and sketching landscapes, and direct your intellect in another channel. Consult all the *female* philosophers of modern and ancient times, and learn the best method of making "light biscuit" and "good coffee," cleaning window-panes and sweeping carpets, scolding servants and mending china. Finally, get the latest edition of "Caudle Lectures," and study them attentively, that you may be prepared to manufacture similar ones, for the edification of that happy gentleman whose name you bear.

Feeling overcome by my labors, I subscribe myself, your friend, MOLLY MYRTLE.

To my Father.

Oh, October's glories, father,
Deck the sunny hill and plain;
But my heart is aching, father,
With a wild and crushing pain;
For thy cheek is growing paler
Each day than the one before,
And thy voice is hollow, father,
As the wind across the moor.

Art thou dying, oh, my father?
Couldst thou leave us here alone?
Is it my heart's anguished beating
That comes to me like a moan?
Oh, the distant vales are dreaming
Calmly in the evening light,
And white clouds drift gently over,
Noiseless as an angel's flight!

And my mother's eyes seem brightening
The blue heavens overhead,

Full of gentle, trusting beauty,
  Like a young bride newly wed,
Oh, *she* beckons thee, my father,
  To that better, upper world!
Ah! I thought them drifting cloudlets—
  They are *mother's wings unfurled!*

It is bright and glorious, father,
  In that joyous, heaven land,
And she's waiting for thee, father,
  Waiting with an angel band!
But, my father, canst thou leave us
  In the cruel world alone?
Seest thou my hot tears, father—
  Hearest thou my pleading moan?

Ah! thy tear-drops glisten, father,
  For thy weeping children's sake!
God, "Our Father," spare my father!
  A world beside, in mercy take!
Oh, I'll ask it in His name!
  Then He'll hear my anguished prayer.
He will spare thee, darling father,
  Till together we go there.

Shall Women Vote?

My answer to that question is "No!" Women have home duties sufficient to engross their attention without having to study politics and argue on the merits or demerits of some licentious politician, before they can venture to vote, or will they follow blindly husband, brother, father, or guardian, and meekly vote as directed? Then what an interesting position a woman would occupy if she had three brothers, each voting differently, and each deafening her with arguments all conclusive that *each* is right. What rest would home afford to a man, when wearied with the world, he goes there, longing for the soft touch of cool fingers—the warm pressure of crimson lips, and soothing tones void of argument, and meets noisy feminine politicians who talk all at once, each pouring a volley of questions and arguments on his devoted head? Poor man! he rushes out of the house wishing some wishes, that we are not commanded to wish in any of the ten commandments, for the deluded female that first raised a voice for voting. Frantically he

rushes down street and meets his friend Tom Rixton, whose face is radiant with the consciousness of having bought over his wife and three cousins to vote as he does. How devoutly the former unfortunate masculine wishes he was able to buy over every female in the United States, so that women would dispense with voting. After cooling the stereotyped "*fevered brow*," of which poets delight to sing, in the evening air, he goes back to the place he calls *home*, where he enjoys the epicurean feast of cold tea and burnt toast. Then how delightfully his digestion is aided by the frowns and pouts of the interesting feminine part of the establishment! How vividly he recalls the time when *he* "voted for *women to vote!*" Then, for *once in his life* he acknowledges, mentally, of course, that he *did wrong*. How cheering it is to enter the house and find "baby" making the air vocal with harmonious squalls—"Little Tom" punching the fire with "father's gold headed cane"—and "Fred" sitting on "papa's new hat," cutting sticks with aforementioned unfortunate gentleman's razor, all because "*mamma is off voting.*"

On a Picture.

Oh, royal light of the glorious eyes,
With their radiance bright as Summer skies,
And, oh, the brow with its pale, proud gleam,
And the mouth that's wrapped in a pleasant dream,
And the dark locks drooping heavy and low
O'er tender lights that come and go,
Brightening the face that smiles in my own
The sweetest love my life has known.

Oh, spirit-brother, my life's dear friend,
What tender thoughts with memory blend.
What sweet hopes rise like tropic-birds
Too bright for the plumage of passionless words,
Too deep and too solemn for lip to express,
Too fond and tender for a cold caress,
Too strong for the wing of a feeble sigh,
Too *sacred* for aught but an *angel's eye.*

A Birthday Tribute to Mrs. Levian G. Webb.

In the silence and the shadow of this sweet poetic hour,
There are thoughts that haunt me strangely with a soft angelic power.

There are thoughts that stir the fountains of my lone heart's deepest cell,
As I sit and muse how fondly 'neath their sweet and witching spell.

And I lean across my memories, breathing many a wailing moan,
For the years whose mantling shadows have their darkness o'er me thrown.

And I almost think the twilight is a portion of my pain,
Yet I know I'm only weeping, that the Past comes not again.

The Past, the Past, the far-off Past, *before my mother died,*
When the billows of existence were a joyous swelling tide.

Before fair Hope went from me, ere I walked the world alone,
Ere my life a crushing shadow or a single grief had known.

Ere the joyous morn went from me, ere the chilling night-time came,
Ere "my life seemed passing outward like a pale, reluctant flame."

Ah, when my soul was walking in the desert all alone,
And the perfume and the beauty of my weary life had flown,

There came a beam of gladness, reaching o'er my soul's dark sky,
And the grateful tears were springing warm and loving to my eye.

There came a burst of music like a young bird's rarest strain,
And tender thoughts were thrilling softest magic through my brain.

There came a breath of perfume stealing o'er my
lone heart's plain,
And drinking in its sweetness, I forgot my woe
and pain.

Ah, the sunshine and the music, and the breath of
sweetest smell,
Were only *thy love*, dearest, in my lone heart's
deepest cell.

And my face, to-day, is brighter, thinking, dearest
friend, of thee.
And the waves of love surge upward like the bil-
lows of the sea.

The love I cannot utter, the love I may not speak,
The love that gushes upward raining tear-drops
o'er my cheek.

And I fold thy face up softly in my yearning,
quivering heart,
And I'll wait until the angels tell thee just *how*
dear thou art.

JUNE 23d, 1862.

The Stepmother's Failure.

CHAPTER I.

ESTELLE NEWMAN'S STEPMOTHER.

All the day long the sun had been sending his golden beams of light on the far-off hill-tops, the green valleys, where violets grew, and the shining rivulet, that wound through the forest, laughing in the sunshine and smiling in the starlight.

Night was coming slowly over the plains, and lights were beginning to appear in the great house on the hill, where Dr. Newman lived. He had been a widower two years, and no doubt, wearying of the deserted halls and vacant rooms, he had concluded to bring a fair young bride to fill his heart and home with gladness, and be a mother to the child, Estelle, that his dead wife had left him. At least so said the villagers, who watched with intense interest every movement made at "Cedar Hill," as Dr. Newman's place was called. Their surmises in this case seemed to be correct, for when the full-orbed moon dropped her quivering light on

the cedars that gave the homestead its name, carriages and "gay chargers" brought merry troops of "fair women and brave men" to the white house on the hill.

Lights were gleaming, jewels flashing; and the "voluptuous swell of music" rolled down the long, sloping hill and tangled itself up merrily with the echoes that slept in the green woods. The little village of S——— lay just beyond, bathed in the quiet moonlight, and seemingly contented with all surrounding circumstances; but, ah! there were hearts in that little village for whom the quiet September night had no charms—hearts that filled with envy and bitterness as they wondered why they were "not good enough to be invited to Cedar Hill." Many expressions of pity, too, were dropped for the motherless child of nine, who would "now have a stuck-up stepmother to rule over her." But Estelle, the child, the object of their compassion, where is she?

It is a lonely spot, and the tangled grass sways mournfully in the night wind over the grave of Estelle's mother.

"Mother, mother, I wish I was down deep in the ground hugged up close in your arms, where they could never find me! I wish I was dead! I do!"

The forest leaves rustled 'gainst each other pityingly, and the starlight twined very compassionate arms about the child.

She was rather tall of her age, but her form was

very slight and willowy. Looking at the goldenish brown hair that rippled down to her shoulders, the low, broad forehead, the mournful hazel eyes, and the full, pouting lips, that quivered with anguish, you wouldn't have called her a beautiful child; but if you had seen her when pleasant excitement stained her cheek with crimson and deepened her eyes to browner, brighter hues, and wakened dimpling smiles around her mouth and over her face, I don't think you would have called her very ugly. At any rate, you could have loved her, if you love a candid, sincere, and confiding nature. I would not have you think Estelle Newman perfection, but I would have you deal leniently with her faults, which were a hasty, passionate disposition, and very bitter hatred when aroused. She had a strong nature, and never did or felt anything by halves. She either loved or hated. You could tell that by the low, passionate tone in which she muttered, "I hate her, I do! She's just like that old black cat that black mammy used to say was a witch, with her big, green eyes shinin' on me, and her hateful paws, that felt so soft, but scratched me whenever I took hold of them. Oh, I hate her! and *she'll* make father hate *me;* and I wish she was dead; and I'd kill her if I thought God wouldn't be mad at me."

The little girl had thrown herself down on the grave of her mother as she spoke these words, with a sob at the close of each sentence.

Behind the marble tombstone, and peeping, half amused, half pityingly, at the little girl, was a young man, about two or three and twenty, though he looked much younger. A few moments longer he listened, but as he heard no other sound than the low sighing of the south winds through the forest, and the passionate sobbing of the child, he concluded to attempt comforting her, and, perhaps, in so doing, he might divert his own mind from a sorrow that was weighing very heavily.

"What are you crying about, little girl?" he asked, laying his hand on the child's head.

She started up, and stood a moment mute with surprise, while the teardrops glistened in the moonlight as they clung to her long, dark eyelashes.

"Won't you tell me what is the matter?" he asked, in those low, sympathetic tones that touch the heart so, as he drew the child to him, and sat down with her on the tresses of the September grass.

There was a half-stifled sob, and then the child said,

"Mother is dead, and father is married again, and—I hate her—I do!"

"Hate who?" queried Willard Dutton, as he bent his handsome head, until its jetty locks mingled with the brown ones of Estelle Newman.

"The woman father married—that's who!" returned the child fiercely.

"Have you seen her?" asked the young man, as

he wondered if any one could look on the glorious beauty of Harriet Richards, now Harriet Newman, and not love her.

"Yes; and I hate her worse than I did before," said the child, clasping her fingers tight together, in the intensity of her feelings.

"What made you hate her before you saw her?" asked the child's companion, bending his head and looking down into the little flushed face beside him.

"Because—because—because she was a stepmother!" said Estelle, flushing deeper at being pressed so closely for a reason.

"A what?" asked Willard Dutton, wondering if he had heard aright.

"A *stepmother!*" repeated Estelle.

The young man half checked a smile as he asked,

"What makes you hate her now?"

"Because I do!" returned the child, defiantly, and yet drooping her head lower with mortification that she could give no reason; that she could not explain the intuitive shrinking from the insinuating, deceitful woman her father had married.

Willard Dutton's fingers wound themselves half coaxingly through the little girl's brown hair, as he said,

"After you know her better you will love her!"

The child started from his arms as she fixed her clear eyes upon his face, and asked,

"Do *you* love her?"

Willard Dutton shivered and turned pale as his

heart moaned an affirmative. His white lips quivered but no word issued from them, for how could he tell that child of a love which he had borne ever since he could remember, for the woman Estelle Newman hated? *He* could not tell it! but oh, *Memory* told the story over to him! Painted to him a little brown school-house, where he and Hattie learned their abc's! He tried to turn away from Memory, but mercilessly she whispered to him childish vows of constancy that he had murmured to Harriet Richards at play-time, or traced in rude, boyish letters on his slate in school-hours. If she got near foot in the class how proud he felt to "miss," until he sat beside her, and then he'd whisper fondly, "I 'missed on purpose, Hattie, to sit by you!" And she'd smile up in his face and clasp his hand as they folded their arms behind them to make them "sit up straight" the teacher said.

Oh, from the vales of that far-back long ago, the old thrilling came back to him as he felt the clasp of "*Hattie's hand!*"

"I say, do *you* love her?" persisted the child.

Willard Dutton started, and had almost answered "Yes," when the memory of his last meeting with Harriet Richards came unto him, and pride would not let him say "Yes," when her words were ringing in his ears, "I suppose I love you, Willard, as well as people ever love; but then I couldn't be happy with a poor man! Dr. Newman, no doubt, loves me as well as you do. He is fine-looking,

wealthy and aristocratic; and if he is fifty, thirty years older than myself, I think *his wealth can make me happier than your love!*" The words were burned in the young man's heart and brain.

"Hattie, Hattie, Hattie!" he moaned, dropping warm tears on the child's brow, as memory thus wrung his soul with anguish.

"My name ain't Hattie—it's Estelle!" returned the child, slipping her little hand in his.

"Well, Estelle?" said the young man, resting his wet cheek against her forehead.

"Is your mother dead, too?" asked the child, in hushed, pitying tones, almost forgetful of her own grief.

"Yes," he returned.

"And did your father marry again like mine?" pursued the child, as if determined to know if he had as much cause for grief as she had.

"Yes," was the almost inaudible answer of Willard Dutton.

"Then I am sorry for you," said the child, winding her arms about his neck, and leaning her little cheek up against his. Her sympathy was very sweet to Willard Dutton, even though she gave it to him because of that for which he wept not. And Estelle, the child, never dreaming but that he wept because his mother was dead and his father had married again, pressed her cheek up closer, while the young man's tears quivered slowly down as he thought of Hattie—blue-eyed Hattie—that could never be his Hattie any more!

The night was half gone when Willard Dutton and Estelle Newman retraced their steps to the house.

As they neared it, the child loosened her little hand from his, whispered "Good-night," and darting quickly from his side, was lost in the thick gloom of the cedars.

Willard Dutton drew up to its proudest height his manly form, and a bitter smile wreathed his lips as he returned to the festive scene where "Hattie! lost Hattie!" was all smiles and gaiety.

"Dear Willard," she whispered, "where have you been? I've looked for you everywhere."

Willard Dutton fixed a look of scorn, that sprang from the depths of an unspeakable woe, upon the face that was never absent from him, and said bitterly,

"I am too much honored by your condescension, Mrs. Newman!"

"Not that name, Willard. Call me Hattie. You know you are *my brother* now!"

The tone of her voice had been almost pleading when she began, but at the close she half affected playfulness.

Willard Dutton turned away with a gesture of impatience, and Harriet Newman crushed back her tears—crushed back her heart's yearnings for the love that henceforth must be naught to her.

CHAPTER II.

TEMPTATION AND TRIUMPH.

"Dear me, what a horrid bore that old wretch is! Wonder how long he will live!" soliquised Mrs. Newman, as she watched the retreating figure of her husband. Heigho, money can't buy every thing; yet, oh, if Willard had had it, how happy *we* could have been!" she continued, tapping her foot nervously on the velvet carpet, that gave back no sound to the movement. "What a strange child that Estelle is," she continued, "I cannot endure her presence. She has such a searching way of looking in your face, as if reading your very thoughts, and then Willard seems to take such a fancy to her. That may be a match! Why not? She could be happy with him; and, man like, he would forget *me*, and learn to love her. Why should *she* be granted that happiness which was denied me? She *shall not.* I *can* prevent it, and *I will!* Willard forget me? Willard cease to love me? Never!"

And the angels of darkness were filled with gladness, as they read the desperate purposes of Mrs. Newman's heart. A moment she sat apparently in deep meditation, and then she started up, saying,

"I shall die of *ennui* here, alone! I wonder where Willard is!"

Glancing a moment in the mirror, to be certain that she was looking as well as 'twas possible for

her to look under the circumstances, she left the room, and went slowly down the broad staircase in search of Willard, who sat in the library with Estelle.

"And you won't forget me when I'm gone, Estelle?" Mrs. Newman heard Willard Dutton ask, as she paused a moment at the door.

"Forget you? Oh ———"

The sentence ended with a burst of tears, but there was no need of any words, for who, looking at the slight, quivering form, and listening to the passionate sobs of the child, Estelle, could have mistaken her meaning?

Willard Dutton looked down on the child, and a soft mist of tenderness gathered in his eyes, then thinking of Harriet Richards' loving, trusting childhood, that ripened into so selfish and calculating a womanhood, he dashed the tenderness from his eyes, and for the sake of the woman who listened at the door, he shut up his heart for a moment to the child that sobbed by his side. 'Twas only for a moment, then drawing from his pocket a small casket, and taking therefrom a tiny ring he placed it upon Estelle's largest finger, as he said,

"Keep this, Estelle, until you quit loving me; and when you do, send it back to me, and that shall be the only token!"

The child looked down upon the ring with mournful fondness, then looking up quickly, she asked,

"And what must *I* give *you*, so that when *you* quit loving *me* you can send it back to me?"

The young man smiled, and said,

"When I quit loving you I will send to you for this ring; until I do, remember that I love you!"

And Estelle, the child, treasured the words up in her heart, as precious gems, to brighten dark days of the years that were to come, while Harriet Newman, the woman at the door, felt the words burn and fester in her proud soul as a prophecy of what the future would bring—joy and happiness to Estelle, misery and wretchedness to herself. Yet she gave no sign of the storm that raged in her bosom; slowly, almost calmly she entered the drawing-room, and soon her voice was heard caroling a merry song, as if life's roses were all thornless. The farewell in the library was prolonged some moments after Mrs. Newman left, then one, the brown-eyed child, went up to the solitude of her own little room, there to indulge her grief. The other sauntered leisurely toward the drawing-room, where he knew Mrs. Newman was alone. He did not tell her of his intention to leave "Cedar Hill," but merely spoke of going to the village, and wished to know if she had any commission for him.

"No! nothing," she tried to say, coldly, but her voice quivered and somehow almost before she knew it, the words had leaped over her lips, "Don't stay long, Willard! It's so lonely without you!"

"Oh! Hattie, Hattie!"

It was all he said, but the passionate, impulsive clasp, that wrung her hand, epitomized a volume of tenderness and suffering. He was gone, and Harriet Newman sat alone, realizing—alas! how bitterly—that the human heart has some depths that gold —aye, even gold may not reach.

It was late when Willard Dutton returned. Dr. Newman was just leaving on professional business, and with a kind of faint consciousness that Hattie would be alone, the young man walked with nervous quickness to the library. A great easy chair was wheeled up to the window, and there worn out with watching for his coming, Estelle had fallen asleep in the thick gathering twilight. At any other time Willard would have wakened her, now his heart was weighed down by a great and sudden joy, whose intensity was almost painful. So leaving the child, who had wearied waiting for him, he sought Mrs. Newman.

"Hattie, Hattie, only a month longer," he murmured to himself, as he entered the spacious drawing-room of Cedar Hill homestead.

Mrs. Newman sat toying with the jeweled bracelets that clasped her snowy arms. As she looked up and caught the eye of Willard Dutton a glad flush wakened over her face as she held out her hand with a pretty pout, "I've been *so* lonely!"

Then from the desolate deeps of his heart broke up a cry of anguish that he could not repress. Pride's trumpet voice could not drown it; reason

and conscience had no time to be heard ere the words came, "Hattie, Hattie, Hattie, if you had waited only a month longer!"

Harriet Newman turned pale as he dashed a letter into her lap, then covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud. Tremblingly she opened the letter, and read that a bachelor uncle had died and left Willard heir to an immense fortune. With one wild, appealing glance and a low shriek of anguish, Harriet Newman fell fainting into the arms that would fain have shielded her from every woe.

A moment she rested in unconsciousness upon his breast; then, with a shivering sigh, lifted up to his gaze her white face, written over with an anguish too deep for utterance. And as he looked a temptation knocked loudly at the door of his soul, but the angels smiled when he put it far from him—that picture of a home afar off on some sunny isle, where the cold world's proud scorn could never come; a beautiful home afar off with Hattie, that would be *his* Hattie, spite of the perjured vows that now separated them. Oh, it was a beautiful vision, and his humanity longed for it; but the God of his mother strengthened him in that hour of temptation, and with no low spoken words of tenderness or quivering kisses from Harriet Newman trembling on his lips he left her—hurried from her as if some fiend were tempting his soul to perdition while he stayed by her side. And 'twas well for you, Willard Dutton, that you left that radiant vision of human loveliness ere you were tempted beyond your strength!

Harriet Newman stood holding back the fleecy curtains and watching him with wistful, misty eyes as he sped away, away; and a bright dream of sinful enjoyment came unto her, too, and she did not resist it. No, she called the wild passion in her heart "love," and felt almost proud that because of its strength she could give up the world—yes, the whole world's smiles—for *his* sake. Ah, she had grown strangely sacrificing in a little month! Once she could not even yield up the vain glory of wealth for his sake. Now she could yield up friends, reputation, everything here and hereafter for *his* sake. Passion would do this! Would love? *Never!*

Ah, Harriet Newman, the angel that smiled on Willard Dutton as he hurried from you and temptation, turned sorrowfully away from your sin-darkened soul as you stood that autumn evening and dreamed bitterly of "*what might have been!*"

CHAPTER III.

WILLARD DUTTON'S LETTERS.

The Autumn sunbeams lay in a shining heap on the dainty monthly rose that was blooming in the window of Mrs. Newman's sitting-room. An elegant little writing-desk was drawn up close to the bright, blazing fire, that seemed hardly *necessary* that balmy day; but Mrs. Newman liked the cheery glitter of firelight—perhaps because it reminded

her of the old childhood days, when Willard Dutton called her "*little wife.*" Strange how those memories would keep haunting her!—the old school-house; the green, sunny slope of the hill in front of it; the clover blossoms that fringed the path homeward; the narrow bridge of rocks that led out to a fallen tree stretching over the little brook that wound its silver fingers through the forest. And drooping their gay cheeks 'gainst the shining, satiny leaves, those crimson berries that Willard used to help her string for a necklace; the glorious old papaw gatherings. Yes, yes; then the winter days, that brought red cheeks and red noses, and such big, cheerful fires. Quite different affairs, to be sure, the huge old log fires were from the dainty affair in that graceful stove, yet Harriet Newman could see sufficient resemblance between the two to feel misty tears struggling upward from her heart.

What *did* make her think so much of Willard Dutton? She was sure she couldn't tell! Dutton, Dutton—what a pretty name it was! How would Hattie Dutton sound? She repeated it over—'twas very musical! She wondered how it would look written, and just drew that little desk up close to the firelight, which laughed in her face, that she might see how it would look. "Harriet Dutton"—"Hattie Dutton"—"H. Dutton"—she wrote it every way she could think of—in every imaginable form and style—and somehow, before she was hardly

conscious of it, she had taken a fresh quire of paper and written "Dear Willard." Then she paused, leaning the face that of late had grown very stern and mournful in the little hands that Willard used to clasp, while through the throbbing portals of her brain swept many wild passion winds. At length pushing back from her forehead the heavy tresses, that in that hour seemed to her like the mocking fingers of a taunting fiend, she whispered,

"I'll write to him as a friend. I wont shock him by any thing else; then too, I shall not compromise my own dignity. This, however, will be sufficient to keep the old memory winds fresh and fragrant in his heart as they are in mine!"

Oh, Harriet Newman—Harriet Newman, where were the angel-wings that ought to have shielded you from this?

The letter was written full of common-place, friendly speeches, that might have seemed half formal and indifferent to the uninitiated, but which were really calm from the very intensity of a passion deep and inexpressible; and yet throughout the artful and seemingly circumspect epistle there was a something that could not fail to convey to an attentive reader a wild pathos, touching and indescribable. 'Twas done, and now a dainty envelope lay ready for its address. Harriet Newman bent closer over the little desk and wrote tenderly and carefully,

"Mr. Willard Dutton, Louisville, Ky."

How familiar the name looked! There was a fascination about it that chained her eyes upon the soft, girlish chirography. Even though while she gazed, a stern agony held her delicate mouth as with an iron grasp, and shadowed the desolate face as with a mantle.

A slight figure came through the half-opened door, and stood behind Hattie's chair, looking with yearning, wistful eyes, upon the name that was laid up in a sacred corner of her little heart. Hattie did not at first perceive the child, but as a slight movement threw Estelle's shadow over the paper, she started up with a frightened, defiant look upon the intruder.

"Why do you come into my room without knocking?" she asked, angrily seizing the child's arm.

"The door was open, and I didn't see any need of knocking!" Estelle replied, with her eyes fixed upon the letter, whose superscription she was giving to her memory for future use.

"Never dare to do it again!" exclaimed Mrs. Newman, releasing her arm and snatching up the letter, while a flush of annoyance came over her face at Estelle's question—

"Did you write for Mr. Dutton to come back again?"

It was humiliating to be forced into the cowardly expedient of lying, but 'twas impulsively uttered,

"I have not written to Mr. Dutton!"

Estelle Newman's lips were very quiet, but like a youthful Nemesis her eyes flashed out,

"*You have told a lie!*"

Mrs. Newman felt it, and vexed and mortified, she sent the child from the room with an angry injunction, whose tone was half threatening, to "attend to her own affairs."

The little footfalls that used to be such music to the dead mother sleeping under the autumn grasses, grew fainter and fainter, then died out in the distance. Yet, though Harriet Newman was alone, that child's presence seemed to haunt her; the searching eyes seemed to gleam up from the roses in the carpet, and the quivering sunbeams, flashing over the tiny buds in the window, reminded her of the small quivering mouth that sometimes spoke such quaint, old-fashioned words.

"She is a very observing child, and will be a constant spy upon my actions. She must be got rid of. She can read and write very well, and ought to be sent off to boarding school! Then when Willard comes here, *she'll* not be constantly in the way, gathering up in her supernatural memory every stray word and unguarded action. Yes, yes, the child will drive me mad if she stays here."

Mrs. Newman stamped her foot impatiently, and hid the letter, beginning "Dear Willard," where curious eyes might not learn its sacred contents.

"Yes, yes; I can have a glorious excuse for going to the village to get new dresses for Estelle—then I can drop the letter myself and run no risk of exposure."

So she planned, and the sunshine went stealing

down to the lonely grave of the sleeping mother as if to tell her that it would come and embrace the clover blossoms over her face when Estelle's little hugging arms were far away.

Dr. Newman came slowly up the avenue. He had just witnessed the death of one of his patients. Perhaps 'twas this which cast such solemn shadows over his face; or it might have been that the sunbeams, fresh from his dead wife's grave, were whispering to him of a young life that gave herself, in youth's bloom and beauty, to one so much older than herself, and yet she never wearied of him—never turned with only *half-suppressed* impatience from his caresses and never uplifted a discontented, unloving gaze unto his own. Could he say as much of the other? He gave his horse a sharp cut as if the pain that swept over his life-chords at the question was making a fiend of him. He went up the wide stair-case, through the spacious hall, but instead of going into his wife's room as usual, he entered the library, and closed the door with a sharp clang.

Harriet Newman had seen him coming up the avenue; had made a mouth at him behind the heavy folds of the window curtains; and then had sat down, with hypocritical smiles and inward shrinking, to await his coming.

But he didn't come. She heard the library door's quick clang, and breathed for a moment more freely; but remembering the purpose she had of

sending Estelle to boarding-school, she started up, painted a soft bloom on her cheeks, smoothed the wavy tresses of her shining hair, and with forced, unwilling smiles, half-brightening, half-deepening the dimples of her face, she sought the library.

"You naughty man, to come home and never care to see your little wife, when she waited so impatiently for you!"

She commenced playfully, but the sharp agony in her heart crept even into those hypocritical words at the close.

Dr. Newman looked up, and a glad tenderness—an *old man's tenderness*, reader—smoothed out the shadows over his face, as he drew her nearer to him, and looking down into the blue, liquid eyes, forgot the little grave that the sunbeams hugged.

"Did you want to see me, darling?"

He bent his head nearer to listen; with his great, warm heart yearning for the silver utterance once again, but it came not.

Her face was hidden on his shoulder, he thought in womanly reserve; and so he kissed the shining waves of her hair, stifled the longing in his heart, and dreamed not what a chord of old memories he had struck upon when he spoke the words, "*Did you want to see me, darling?*" They were the very words *Willard had spoken* unto her the morning before her marriage, when he came in answer to her summons. She had sent for him to say, that spite of the old childish vows; spite of the times he

had held her in his arms, and left his kisses on her face; spite of all the past that must henceforth and forever be a bitterness and a reproach unto her, she was going *to sell herself for gold!* Yes, she had sent for him to tell him this; and bright, and eager, and hopeful, he stood before her with a mellow love-light stealing over his face, like a Summer sunset over a sweet home-picture. It was very hard to strike out all that gay radiance by her cold, cruel words, but Pride held her heart as with an iron grasp, and though she shivered when he asked, "Did you want to see me, *darling?*" yet, in a moment, she had told him all, and neither his white, despairing face, nor warm, ardent pleading, could loosen the grasp of Pride's icy fingers.

Mrs. Newman was thinking of it all, and, oh! loathing the tender arms of the old man, that encircled her.

"Say—did you want to see me, darling?"

He had waited for her answer, and from the far-off, yearning deeps, the question broke up a second time.

"Yes! oh yes!" she moaned, yet the wailing was not in answer to the old man, but to the haunting voice of Willard Dutton, that memory rung through the desolate valleys of her soul. The angels mercifully spared that old man this knowledge, and so a glad smile drifted over his face, and a glad thanksgiving over his heart. It was well!

Thus we are cheated all through life! Our dear-

est hopes but bright illusions; our darkest woes but bitter fancies! So we shall continue to go on with blinded vision, until in the morning-light of Eternity, we see all things clearly. Hail, happy day! How many tired hearts look off eagerly for thy coming!

A long time they sat—the old man and the old man's bride—and not until the sun had dropped down behind the distant hill-tops, did Harriet Newman speak of her plan to send Estelle to boarding-school. She spoke in an enchantingly coaxing way; expatiating on the advantages of it.

Dr. Newman felt that little hand in his; the blue eyes gleaming up in his face; and those dimpling smiles, dropping like sunbeams into his heart, do you wonder that he was amiable and acquiescent?

"Girls needed a great deal when they went to boarding-school," Mrs. Newman said, more in the tone of one trying to keep up a conversation than really giving information.

But though Harriet Newman tossed restlessly on her couch that night, thinking of the morrow when she would carry Willard's letter to the post-office, yet she did not go, for the next day was rainy and disagreeable, so, of course, going to the village must be postponed. In her impatience at delay, she sought to pass away a few of the weary moments, by telling Estelle of the change that was to be made in her monotonous life. In order to make the child anxious to go, Mrs. Newman told her

wild, exciting stories of examinations and admiring crowds; of "premiums," and finally of a triumphant scene, when she would "graduate" and come home "*so accomplished!*"

Estelle's ambitious nature grasped this eagerly, and that night her mind was so full of it, that she, too, wrote upon an envelope, "Mr. Willard Dutton, Louisville, Ky." Fearing she might forget the address, she had written it first; and now she took some paper for the important missive. Not knowing exactly how to begin, she concluded her stepmother must know the best method, so she, too, wrote—"*Dear Willard!*"

CHAPTER IV.

INDIANA FEMALE COLLEGE.

"Girls, there's a new scholar 'arriv!' Suppose we slip down in the hall and see the name on her trunk!"

"Agreed!" screamed half a dozen merry voices in a breath; and a moment later the whole *posse comi tatus* were stealing softly through the spacious halls of the Indiana Female College, to inspect the stranger's trunk.

"E. Newman, Livingston County, Ky."

"A corn-cracker!" they whispered, gleefully.

"Whar and thar!" exclaimed tall Miss Newton,

with a grimace, while mischievous Emma Terence whispered,

"Just laugh going through that hall if you *dar'*!"

Suppressing their mirth as best they could, the girls stole back to their rooms, as they imagined, very softly. Perhaps they would not have congratulated themselves on having been so quiet had they seen the matron's room door open as they disappeared, while that worthy personage, with protruded cap and spectacles, listened intently for a repetition of the noise that she was not quite certain whether she *heard* or *fancied.*

"Oh, girls, a second edition of last year's Mahalia Boone!" shrieked Em Terence, as she closed the door of the "May-flower," as the room was called where those eight merry girls ate surreptitiously obtained pickles and "goodies"; and from their four respective beds told, alternately, love and ghost stories, after the nine o'clock period of turning off gas, and the matron's motherly "go to sleep, girls!"

What a waste of breath that injunction was! Said girls invariably testified their appreciation of it by a regular combat, in which pillows were the chief weapons. But they are talking of Mahalia Boone and "Mahalia Boone's second edition."

"I didn't start to school until she left," exclaimed Nannette Peters, who was chief mover in plans for fun.

"*You* recollect her, Bell Dawson, don't you?" asked Em Terence.

"I guess I do," replied the person addressed, "Can I *ever* forget her inimitable, 'I reckon I know *whar* I was raised,' whenever we girls hinted about some people's being as green as grass?"

There was a perfect tornado of little screams at this.

"And girls," put in Fannie Romaine, "don't you recollect that letter we found in her desk where she had written home that a few of the *Hoosiers* had a little learnin', but not much common sense; and she wanted her father to send a *niggah* to make up her bed in the morning."

"Yes, yes, we recollect it," they screamed, "Mahalia Boone is a name never to be forgotten!"

"She is not a fair specimen of the Kentuckians," said Mattie Reynolds, with some asperity; (her sister had married a Kentuckian) "I know brother Sam is rich, and smart too. He's got more money than would buy out all of us put together."

"How much was Mahalia Boone's father worth, girls?" interrupted Nannette Peters.

"Oh, a dollar or so, and a few cabins full of *niggas!*" returned Em Terence, with a mirth-provoking grimace.

Just then the "first gong" sounded for supper, and the girls began smoothing collars and dresses and ringlets, while for a moment the busy hum of conversation ceased. Some one tapped gently on

the door, and as a half-dozen voices said "come in," the matron entered, leading by the hand, trembling, frightened Estelle Newman.

"Young ladies, this is Miss Newman. There is in here, I think, a vacant lounge which she will occupy. Furnish her with combs and brush until her trunk is sent up."

The matron was gone, and the trembling child stood looking round in mute, bewildered awe. How crestfallen and disappointed the girls were. They had expected a tall masculine, awkward creature; in fact, a second edition of Mahalia Boone, from whom they drew their idea of "corn-crackers," but that timid, shrinking form, with its pale, ethereal face—really 'twas too bad to have no "fun," after all! A child, a pretty child! Why could not she have been an awkward gawk, verdant and amusing? For a moment they were silent and disappointed; then Estelle found it necessary to give rapid replies in order to answer all the questions showered upon her.

"What kind of a house did she live in?" "How many negroes had her father?" "Had she any grown brothers?" "Was her mother dead? and did she have a stepmother? or was her father a widower?"

What a relief when that brazen-faced gong sounded supper! Estelle had been kept very closely at home; ergo, was unfamiliar with that horrid affair denominated a *gong*.

"There's the gong, girls!" screamed Em Terence. Indistinctly spoken, it *did* sound slightly like *horn*. Estelle had often seen them blow her father's old tin horn for the field hands to come to dinner; but it sounded very different from this. Could it be *possible* that was a *horn?* She pondered the question in her mind a moment, then being made bold by Hoosier-inquisitiveness, she pulled Em's dress, and asked timidly,

"Was *that* a *horn?*"

"A horn—a *horn!* girls—a *horn!*" screamed Em, in a perfect ecstacy of mirth; while Estelle, hearing the suppressed shrieks of laughter, felt her cheeks burn with indignation.

The supper-table looked long and imposing with its gleaming lights and "company preserves," as the girls denominated those peaches and quinces that never came out save on special occasions.

Dr. Newman sat close to the president, Mr. Coolard. The matron had drawn down her face with a fresh layer of dignity, ludicrous in the extreme. Mrs. Coolard, poor cypher, looked more meek and cowed than ever, while Mr. Coolard appeared the same keen-eyed, sharp-nosed tyrant, with that "monarch-of-all-I-survey" expression, that he seemed to consider peculiarly becoming to his style.

The girls marched into the dining-room with the solemnity of a funeral procession, all save Estelle, who sprang eagerly into the chair beside her father, and ventured to move her plate an inch or two

closer to her father. Mr. Coolard regarded this proceeding with an expression that plainly said, "You'll get over that, little girl!"

Stale baker's bread and watery tea; ditto molasses, with an interesting allowance of butter; chip-beef, and slightly soured preserves, could hardly, in justice, be said to tempt an epicurean palate.

One by one the girls leaned back in their chairs with that unconquerable expression of content that will creep over a school-girl's face, spite of all her trials. There were some faces too that struggled with a laugh, at the memory of "Was *that a horn?*"

"And *was that a horn?*" became a by-word at Indiana Female College! Did the girls hear the slightest unusual noise, instantly a half-dozen voices made the provoking inquiry. Any kind of an opportunity where the question could be asked they embraced eagerly, until unhappy Estelle felt herself to be the most unsophisticated little *green*-"horn" that was ever tormented by mischievous school-girls. In vain did she give up unmurmuringly her paper, envelopes, and postage stamps. In vain did she lend her pocket money, according to Scripture, "without expecting to receive as much again!" In vain did she distribute freely her box of "goodies," that came regularly every month! Nothing could obliterate from their minds that thorn in Estelle's side, the question that was now stereotyped and alarmingly inexhaustible, "*Was that a horn?*"

"Girls, I'm starved to death!"

'Twas the second night after Estelle's arrival that Nannette Peters made this startling announcement.

"Can we trust her?" whispered Bell Dawson.

"If she tells, I'll throw her out of the window the next dark night it rains and I find her asleep, so she can't scream until she touches the ground; and we can tell Mr. Coolard she jumped out!" said Mattie Reynolds, looking as threatening as her insignificant pug-nose and pale eyes would permit her.

Estelle looked up inquiringly, yet with an undefined fear.

"Will you tell?" asked Em Terence, seizing her arm.

"Tell what?" asked Estelle in alarm!

"Anything you see us do!" three or four voices answered at once.

"No!" said Estelle, while her face grew a shade paler at the memory of Mattie Reynolds' threat about throwing her out of the window when she was asleep and couldn't help herself!

"Come on then!"

Every girl was on her feet in a twinkling, and hiding a lantern under a large woolen shawl, Nannette Peters led the van.

Shoeless and shivering, they went softly down one, two, three flights of steps, until they were in the basement. Carefully opening the kitchen door they went out, not stopping until they had reached the end of a long corridor, where, close beside a padlocked door, might be seen a low window, with one small pane of glass broken out.

"Girls," began Nannette Peters, with mock solemnity, setting the lantern on the window sill, "in this department you will find apples, potatoes, and a few turnips, all of which are calculated to satisfy the cravings of a hungry stomach."

"Nonsense, Nannette, don't stop to fool!" said Em Terence, impatiently. "The question is how are we to get them?"

Nannette stood in dignified silence, with the faintest possible expression of pique that her address should have been so little appreciated.

"Here, she can get them!" said Mattie Reynolds, seizing Estelle, and forcing her half way through the narrow aperture before the child had a suspicion of her intention.

A half-suppressed scream rose to Estelle's lips, but, between coaxings and threatenings, she was finally induced to be put in at the window, and hand out such things as she was directed to, from that store-room that Mr. Coolard, deluded man, imagined impenetrable when the door was locked, and the key hung up in the matron's room.

Potatoes, apples and turnips! No wonder Mrs. Baylond (the matron) found it necessary to administer an emetic next day to the languid, headaching girls that came moping down to the breakfast table, and turned with undisguised loathing from the innocently weak coffee that was the only accompaniment to the stale baker's bread and butter. Mrs. Baylond said "students ought not to eat meat."

How gladly would the girls have disclaimed any such pretensions, could that have secured them the meat that was seen in small quantities, once a day, on Indiana Female College dining table.

"Those horrid turnips! I knew they'd make us sick," groaned Nannette Peters, that day in her room, as she, with some of her companions, was experiencing from the emetic, a relief less elegant than unburdening.

Estelle, alone, escaped headache, and an emetic. She, poor child, had been too much frightened to gormandize as the rest had done, consequently had the unthankful office of general waitress to perform.

Out of school-hours it was, "Here, Estelle, look there in my trunk, and hand me that novel!" "Estelle, do put some more coal in that stove, I believe I've got a chill!" "Estelle, take that pitcher, and run down for some fresh water!"

So faithfully did she perform the various tasks assigned her, that when she laid her tired little body down on her lounge that night, Em Terence whispered,

"It's real nice to room with a little girl, ain't it? They're so handy!"

Estelle heard it, and pressed her cheek closer on her pillow with a little flush of pleasure that those "big girls" thought it "nice to room with her." And when she reflected on the many times they needed waiting upon, she couldn't help but wonder how they lived there so long, without any negroes,

before she came; and as she closed her eyes in slumber, a dim, dreamy wish floated over her, that little black Florida was there to help her run down after water, and up stairs, after shawls, and in the study room after books, and to the school-room for slates; and various other errands "too numerous to mention."

CHAPTER V.

ESTELLE'S COMPOSITIONS.

Six times since the *début* of Estelle at "Indiana Female College," the young ladies of said institution had worn white dresses and fanciful sashes to the annual night exhibitions, and bogus day-time examinations, given for the edification of a large and delighted audience. Six times Mr. Coolard had made affecting speeches to his graduates; and received fees from grateful parents, as he complimented them on the precocity of their daughters' intellects, whose brilliancy he was certain must have been *inherited*. Mr. Coolard was a thorough-going *Yankee*. I don't mean by that merely being born in a free State, but I mean that all his dealings, to a close observer, savored unmistakeably of "wooden nutmegs," and "oaken hams." He it was that looked stern and threatening, and terrible at the smallest and most dependent girls, but condescendingly amiable as sessions drew to a close, and large

girls with wealthy parents came near him. He it was that shed crocodile tears over graduating compositions, in which *he* had inserted affecting passages relating to himself. He it was that snubbed his wife, and bullied his butcher, and looked sanctimonious Sundays and thanksgivings.

Estelle understands him perfectly; and though she has not forgotten the old, childish vow, she once made, to shoot him as soon as she got to be a woman, yet she has long since abandoned the idea of resorting to this mode of redress for the nights she has been sent supperless to bed, and the Saturdays she has been locked in her room for some trifling "sin of omission or commission."

It is evening now, and Estelle is sitting near an open window, with her arms about her confidante, Joanna Stapleford. It is only a month before examination, and they are talking of it.

"Oh, your composition, Estelle! Don't you dread it?"

"Do you mean the reading or composing?" returned Estelle.

"Both!" said Joanna with a long, disconsolate face.

"No, I used to dread reading them, but never composing them; yet I never shall get up to read a composition without remembering the first one I ever read. How I came down from the platform flushed and happy and triumphant, and having made no impassable stopping places in its delivery,

while Em Terence, who you remember ran off from school year before last, and married, whispered—'*was that a horn?*' Oh, that foolish, childish question; it used to be the bane of my life!" concluded Estelle, in a half mournful tone, that was, nevertheless, mirth-provoking.

"I remember some of the girls that used to room in here," said Joanna. "Let me see, what became of Mattie Reynolds?"

"Don't you remember she was so anxious to marry some one from the extreme South, who had money; and she imagined they all had it; that she married a worthless drunkard; and I think she is governess in her sister's family now, in Kentucky. She was at our last examination, and looked so forlorn I pitied her," answered Estelle.

"Oh, Estelle," broke out Joanna suddenly, evidently not sharing her companion's emotions of pity.

"What a glorious time we'll have this vacation. We'll enjoy ourselves so much, for there won't be any noisy children like—beg your pardon—there was last vacation at Cedar Hill. Oh, dear! your stepmother used to say we were cut out for old maids, because we didn't feel it a seventh heaven to hear those three little miniature copies of herself squall incessantly. I don't see, Estelle, how you can bear to stay at home—those children would set me crazy! Then, they're your stepmother's, anyhow!"

"They're my father's, too," whispered Estelle, as a soft moisture came into her eyes, and told, more eloquently than words, how tenderly she felt toward the father that, with his young wife, and gay, noisy children, oft-times grew half-forgetful of the Estelle that his dying wife had given unto him, whispering with her latest breath,

"Love her always, for my sake, Edmund."

That same old gong that more than six years ago, had called the occupants of the "May-flower" to baker's bread and sour preserves, interrupted our heroines; and, arm-in-arm, they joined the procession in the hall as they marched to the dining-room.

"Estelle," whispered Joanna, "won't you write my composition? You can write so much better than I can!"

"Yes," nodded Estelle.

"Don't tell any one," pleaded Joanna.

Estelle gave here a reproachful look that plainly said,

"Do you think me capable of such a meanness?"

Joanna understood the look, and answered,

"I didn't think you would tell, darling; but I felt so much anxiety about it, I couldn't help from asking you not to."

They had reached the dining-room door now, and, of course, any farther conversation for the present was not to be thought of.

"Young ladies," began Mr. Coolard, in his most imposing manner, "your compositions must all be

handed in by the close of next week, for correction.

The young ladies addressed certainly bore a stronger resemblance to vexed, frightened children than dignified young ladies, when this announcement was made.

"Compositions!"

How the girls shivered at the word, looking into each other's faces despairingly; vexatiously seeking encouragement from clouded brows and pouting lips. What a prophecy there was in the words of hours of racking thought with uplifted pen, that brought not a single original idea! What a prophecy of wading through numberless pages to extract an idea here and there and alter a few sentences that it might not *all* be copied; and then, after all the labor, to have Mr. Coolard throw down the labored production with an annihilating frown, accompanying the accommodating information, "There isn't a grain of sense in a particle of this trash!"

"Come, Estelle dear, write my composition now. Here is paper, and there's a pen. Commence—I'll hold the ink for you!"

They had reached the "May-flower" now, and Joanna Stapleford bent over Estelle eagerly.

"Let's lock the door," said Joanna, "so that no one can come in before we have time to hide the composition!"

The door was locked, and with an atlas on her

knee, Estelle began writing Joanna Stapleford's composition, which latter young lady having no idea of what is called concentration of mind, interrupted Estelle every third minute with questions like

"Which do you think most becoming to me, Estelle, curls or braids?" "Wouldn't you hate to look as dish-watery as Alice Litepate?"

Estelle bore this for a while, but at length becoming annoyed, exclaimed suddenly,

"I can't write, Joanna, if I keep answering questions."

Just then there was a hurried knock at the door, and either from being suddenly startled or from impulsive pique, Joanna dropped the inkstand in Estelle's lap, thereby staining a large spot on a beautiful blue organdie that had been voted her most becoming dress.

In her haste to hide the composition, Joanna left Estelle to open the door, and get the ink from her dress as best she could.

'Twas Alice Litepate at the door. She is hardly worth a description, and yet I may as well give it. She was rather tall, with pale, blue watery eyes, and light yellowish hair. Her father was an industrious mechanic, of Oldham County, Ky., who had managed, by industry and economy, to send Alice to boarding-school.

This was considered a proceeding so wonderful that Miss Alice felt it incumbent upon her to snub

the smaller girls, and insult all whose wealth and position did not entitle them to her toadying.

"Dear Estelle," she began, "I just came in to get you to write me a composition on 'Hope.' *Maw* and *Paw* will be here at the exhibition, and if I don't have a good composition they will be so mortified. They've spent *so much* money upon me," she continued, with an insipid smirk of complacency, "that I want to make as good a show as I can."

Estelle felt so contemptuous a pity for the milk-and-water affair before her, that she smiled and said,

"Well, I'll write it to-night."

"Now, Estelle, *don't* tell any one!" she whispered, as Joanna Stapleford, who had left the room as Alice came in, re-entered. Estelle's face was full of a contempt she could not repress as she gave the required promise.

"How I do hate that Estelle Newman!" muttered Alice to herself as she reached the hall. "The hateful thing is so proud and stuck-up, and she thinks herself so smart she almost dies with conceit."

Ah, Alice Litepate! *envy* was an abiding guest in your bosom.

"Here, Estelle," said Joanna, "do finish this, darling. I won't speak another word to you! I'm sorry I spilled that ink on your dress. That idiotic Alice Litepate startled me so I didn't know what I was doing."

"'Tis no matter about the dress," returned Estelle, beginning to write. Joanna sat very quiet, while Estelle's fingers flew unweariedly over the unstained foolscap. 'Twas finished, and Joanna Stapleford's eyes sparkled with pleasure as Estelle read it aloud; and thinking of a triumph hour when applauding boquets would be showered at her feet, she put her arms about Estelle and whispered, "Oh, I love you so much!" and Estelle, the child woman, thought how sweet to write such compositions all the time, if they ever brought such words of tenderness. Her heart was yearning to pour out its gushing fullness, and laying her bright face in Joanna's lap, she lifted up her brown eyes and whispered, "*Love* me *always*, Annie!"

The dark, proud face above quivered a moment, half remorsefully, for just then she had been thinking how she should talk to Estelle, and keep her from writing another composition so good, and then —and then who would receive the highest praise from the listening crowd attending "Indiana Female College" exhibition? But loving, trusting Estelle knew it not, and so she lay there with those hypocritical arms about her, and the moonlight brightening the goldenish waves of her hair. Estelle, motherless Estelle, my heart aches for you, my poor child, when I think how full your young heart was of tenderness, and how you longed with unutterable longing for a *friend—a true, constant, affectionate friend;* and that summer night you

thought, deluded child, that you had a friend; so the misty tears of gratitude came into your eyes as you listened to those whispered words of tenderness.

Oh, Friendship, Friendship, thou art amongst the fairest of earth's mocking dreams!

Ding, dong! "The bell for study hour, girls," grinned Alice Litepate, at the door.

That study room! What a *study* it was, to be sure, with its multiplicity of faces and forms—bright girls and dull ones—some sour, and sarcastic, and pale-faced—some rosy and amiable—some coquettish and vain—some impulsive and warm-hearted, and a few, oh! how *very few*, studious and patient.

There in that corner sat Julia Melbourne, with a novel inside of her atlas; in the shadow of the window curtain sat Alice Litepate, penning an insipidly sentimental note to one of the college boys, who had made the little simpleton believe he considered her "beautiful"; there by the table sat Virginia Finly, anon working problems for the girls, or explaining a lesson they did not understand, while they, not thanking her for the trouble, laughed so soon as her back was turned at what they termed her "conceit."

O' all the passions, oh! Envy, thou art least akin to Heaven!

The study hour was over!—that is, Julia Melbourne had finished her novel; Alice Litepate had

written two pages of mawkish sentiment, and Virginia Finly had made her head ache teaching schoolmates, whose envy shut out all gratitude for her services. And Estelle, I am ashamed to tell it of her, instead of studying her unlearned lessons, followed her "inspiration" and redeemed her promise by writing Alice Litepate's composition, which interesting creature received the favor as a matter of course, deeming it but due her tallow-haired style of "beauty."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSING COMPOSITION.

The long looked for day, the last day of examination, dawned clear and beautiful. The bell for rising was rung half an hour earlier than usual, and heads in curl paper looked with nervous eagerness over questions that might be asked that day.

After many interruptions Estelle had written her own composition. Joanna Stapleford, with her great thirst for praise, felt that she could not bear for Estelle to read a composition that would bear off the palm. She had racked her brain for some time to prevent this, and that morning what she felt to be a "bright idea," entered her head.

"She could manage it," she said, mentally, as she sprang out of bed that morning at the first tap of the bell. Had Estelle heard the words she would

have understood what they meant two hours afterward, when she entered the room and found her composition covered with ink and an empty bottle lying close beside it. Poor Estelle! a moment she looked, then realizing the catastrophe, burst into tears.

"What is it, Estelle? What is the matter?"

It was Joanna Stapleford who had entered the room.

"Oh, Annie, my composition! look at it! and I've so much to do! I shall not have time to copy it off before the exercises begin!"

"Dear Estelle," said the artful girl, "I will copy it for you. Here, give it to me," and before Estelle could reply Joanna had left the room.

What a relief it was! With a murmured blessing upon the head of her "*unselfish friend*," Estelle dismissed the unfortunate affair from her mind.

"Julia Gollard," said Joanna Stapleford, "if you will copy off this composition for me and not tell any of the girls about it, I will give you a dollar so soon as you have finished it."

"Well, give it here, quick, then!" answered the person addressed, an ignorant, grasping creature, who would do anything for money, and who had just brains enough to remove her slightly from an idiot. Joanna knew this, and that is why she had selected her to copy and bear the blame of the mutilation of poor Estelle's composition. Whole paragraphs were marked out, sentences altered, and

words inserted, until such another piece of nonsensical bombast could scarcely be found. Julia Gollard, however, copied it in her stiff, round hand, never dreaming that it was not just what it should be.

Joanna Stapleford received it with grim triumph, paid her miserable menial the promised amount, and in imagination reveled in the deafening applause of admiring hundreds that would be assembled that night. She had no fear of being excelled now.

The day was passed. In the deserted schoolroom the blackboards were full of the problems that trembling fingers and throbbing brains had worked, and Mr. Coolard's desk was full of books, whose short questions and long answers had struck terror to the heart of many a trembling school girl, examination-days. How the walls of the old room seemed fairly radiant with a mute ecstacy at the thought of the long resting *quiet* that the vacation would bring!

"Oh, Annie, my composition! did you copy it off? I've been so busy all day I haven't thought of it until just this moment."

The clear, trusting eyes that were upturned to Joanna Stapleford might well have deepened the flush upon her cheek. The glowing dye of anticipation deepened and burned, and for a moment her guilty heart trembled. 'Twas only for one wavering moment, then she answered, calmly,

"I began copying it off, but Mrs. Coolard sent

for me, and so I paid Julia Gollard a dollar to finish it."

"That simpleton?" asked Estelle, in surprise.

"Yes, *she* was the only one that was not too busy, and I thought she'd have the sense to copy when it was all as plain as the nose on her face."

Joanna Stapleford tried to laugh, but 'twas a forced, uneasy laugh, betraying more disquiet than Estelle's involuntary sigh as she thought of her composition being in Julia Gollard's stiff, awkward handwriting.

"Well, well, 'what can't be cured must be endured,'" concluded she, as Joanna Stapleford, with combs and brush, said,

"Estelle, dear, do braid my hair for me. You have so much better taste than that horrid, fussy hair-dresser that the other girls keep busy all the time."

And Estelle, weaving in tender thoughts of her bosom friend, threaded the long, jetty masses through her fingers patiently, as if braiding hair was forever to be her constant employment.

"It looks mean to do her so," soliloquized Joanna, "but it isn't, for what harm will it do her? Every one will know it's a mistake some way, for she has always borne off the palm for good compositions. I think she might give up to me once."

The compositions lay in a snowy pile, gaily interspersed with the glittering ribbons that held them together. The exhibition room was very quiet, for

the girls were in their rooms busily engaged in beautifying themselves for the coming night of triumph.

"That hateful Estelle Newman! How conceited she did look to-day, outstripping us all at the examination, and I suppose to-night, when she gets up to read her composition she will look upon the rest of us with more contempt than ever. But she shall not do it! She has been reading compositions here for four or five years, and she might stay in the background to-night—*she shall!*"

It was Alice Litepate that soliloquized thus, as she entered the exhibition room, and approached the little stand where the compositions lay. Hastily turning them over until she saw the name "Estelle Newman," she seized that one eagerly, and hurrying to one of the vacant rooms, put it into the stove, and threw a lighted match upon it. 'Twas well. Better for the miserable stuff to perish in the flames than for poor Estelle to be mortified by attempting to read what would have drawn down ridicule and contempt upon her.

Thus it frequently is, those who seek to injure do us a kindness, when, perhaps, neither they nor we are conscious of it.

'Tis needless to say, there was much searching for the missing composition, and great wonderment as to its whereabouts.

Miss Hansford, the superintendent of the exhibition, made diligent inquiry concerning it; and on learning that Estelle had given it to Joanna Staple-

ford to copy, and had not seen it since, she regarded Joanna with a suspicious look, that cut the proud girl to the quick.

"Miss Hansford, I got Julia Gollard to copy it off, and I put it right here on this table. Julia saw me put it there. Didn't you, Julia?"

But that person, stupid as she was, understood there was some kind of a difficulty, and fearing lest she should become involved, denied any knowledge whatever of the missing composition.

Joanna was in despair. In vain did she entreat Julia to be a witness to her placing the composition on the table, and immediately going to her room where she had been ever since. Julia was inexorable, and Miss Hansford said sternly,

"Go to your room, Miss Stapleford; and if you are conscious of wronging a bosom-friend, your conscience will be sufficient punishment."

Poor Joanna! She had not expected retribution so soon. Already the girls regarded her with ill-concealed contempt, and Alice Litepate whispered audibly,

"Look out for your compositions, girls, if you don't want them stolen!"

To Joanna's lips come a quotation she could not repress,

"The insults of the powerful were bad enough, yet these I have managed to bear; but to be spurned by so base a creature as thou, the disgrace of nature, is to die a double death!"

"Umph! *Shakspeare!*" said Alice Litepate, while the girls' titter at her ignorance was hushed by Miss Hansford's commanding tone,

"If you cannot prove your innocence, Miss Stapleford, bear suspicion meekly."

Joanna left the room with haughty lip and dignified carriage; but the tears rained over her proud face a moment later, when Estelle, with generous, clasping arms, whispered,

"I don't believe you did anything to my composition, Annie. I know you put it on the table just as well as if I had seen you put it there. The whole world could not make me believe anything against you, darling."

"I did put it there, Estelle. Indeed I did," said Joanna, striving, by this assertion, to stifle the conscience pangs for the greater wrong she would have done Estelle.

The exhibition was over. The girls had acquited themselves creditably; and even Miss Hansford looked at Joanna Stapleford smilingly when she saw the boquets that were showered at her feet as she read, in her loud, clear voice, the composition Estelle had written for her.

"Here, Estelle, these flowers, these cards, this ring fastened here. Everything they threw me tonight is yours. You wrote the composition. Here, you may have them all."

They were alone, and the proud face was pale with the bitterness of remorse.

"No, Annie, if you hadn't read it, 'twould not have sounded half so well. I will take one little bunch of flowers and keep it forever for your sake. Don't you know Mr. Coolard says, 'Delivery is three-fourths.' If I had read it hardly any one could have heard me, and I shouldn't have been so applauded. So you see they are yours after all, Annie."

Joanna was penitent and humble, and miserable that night, but, next morning she was the the same proud, ambitious, unscrupulous Joanna Stapleford, that, for some inscrutable Providence, her Maker had created.

'Twas after breakfast, and the girls were packing trunks, making promises to write often and love forever, bidding farewell for a season to their favorite haunts, and, ever and anon, leaning out in the June sunbeams, to watch for the stage that would not arrive for an hour yet.

"Some gentlemen in the parlor for Miss Newman," said the chambermaid, opening the door of the "May-flower," where Estelle and Joanna were busily engaged in laying plans of enjoyment for the coming vacation.

"Some gentlemen! Oh, Annie, who can they be?" breathlessly asked Estelle.

"Probably your father and some other old fogy!" smiled Joanna.

Estelle breathed more freely, and made a move doorward feeling much relieved.

Yes, it was her father, and—and the parlor was dark, and she didn't recognize the other until her father said,

"This is Mr. Dutton, my daughter."

Estelle gave one blushing upward glance at the face that seemed "sacred to the memory of" her childhood. She looked up eagerly, but 'twas not *that* face her childhood had known and loved. No, 'twas a younger, fairer, tenderer face, mellowed by the unseen mother-kisses of her who had gone before. This was a cold, stern face, with a proud, sarcastic mouth, and searching, penetrating eyes that made Estelle half uncomfortable, spite of Willard Dutton's smile and cordial hand-clasp.

"He must be about twenty-seven or eight," soliloquized she, "a crusty old bachelor." Then she looked down at the ring upon her smallest finger, and smiled as she remembered the old contract about keeping it until she quit loving him. "I ought to give it back now," was her mental comment, as she stole another glance into the eyes that were searching her face for some trace of the child, toward whose womanhood he had looked so regretfully. Estelle, however, did not interpret the look as anything more than a prolonged mental criticism, and accordingly permitted her lips to pout a trifle more than was necessary. Willard Dutton noted this, and turned away with the thought, "She, too,

has grown willful and spoiled and sarcastic." Estelle read the contempt upon his face, but the feeling of pique changed to one of wonder as she saw the yearning mournfulness that for a moment mantled his proud face. Well might she wonder, only the angels heard the wailing cry of his soul in that hour, "Oh, woman, woman, thou fairest of earth's delusions."

"You are not going home with me then this vacation?" half queried, half affirmed Dr. Newman.

"I promised to go home with Joanna Stapleford," returned Estelle, as if half afraid of having to combat some objections.

"She was the dark-haired young lady who read so splendid a composition last night, was she not?" queried Mr. Dutton.

They must have thought it strange that Estelle should blush and drop her head so at hearing another praised; nevertheless, she did, and her faintly spoken "Yes, sir," was scarcely audible.

"Affectation," sneered Willard Dutton, mentally, as he noticed her emotion, never dreaming how her heart was thumping to receive such praises from his cold, silent self.

"Bring the young lady in, and let us get acquainted with her," said Dr. Newman.

How glad Estelle was of this excuse to escape from Willard Dutton's searching eyes and haughty lip.

Joanna Stapleford was delighted with the idea of

being presented to the wealthy, aristocratic Mr. Dutton, and, as she arranged her jetty braids, in imagination she already beheld him at her feet, entreating her to preside over his heart and—*pocket book.* And cogitating upon this interesting and much to be desired period of her existence, she said,

"Estelle, let us insist upon his going home with us! You know 'Crab Orchard Springs' are not far from our house, and I think we can persuade him to go."

They pleaded to so good a purpose, aided by Dr. Newman, that an hour later, when the stage drove up, Mr. Willard Dutton was one of the passengers bound for "Crab Orchard."

Joanna Stapleford attributed this to her own supernatural attractions, which belief rendered her lively and amiable and chatty in the extreme. How different would she have felt could she have lifted the veil that hid Mr. Dutton's heart, and read there only *ennui*, and a restless desire to get away from himself. So while Joanna was congratulating herself upon an easy conquest, Willard Dutton's mental reverie might have been recorded something like,

"I really believe the girl imagines I am entranced by her miraculous fascinations. Well, if she feels capable of winning me, let her try. 'Twill be a slight relief from life's dull monotony to be courted by a school girl. Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Willard Dutton laughed mentally.

A faint shadow of this transient mirth shone over his lips, and Joanna noted it as an appreciation of a witty remark that she had a moment before congratulated herself upon making.

"Strange that *you* do not bring to bear the artillery of *your* youthful attractions, little one," half sneered Willard, glancing toward Estelle, who was watching an old man and his young wife, and wondering if the woman didn't sometimes forget and call him father.

"He crowds himself in the corner to give her plenty of room," thought Estelle. "I wonder if it wouldn't be nice, after all, to marry an old man? Pshaw! what am I thinking of? Marrying an old man? What fun could I have? Suppose, for instance, I should marry Mr. Dutton—whew!" Estelle felt herself insulted at the bare supposition, and fanned herself violently to cool her indignation.

Ah, Estelle! The passion-flowers are blooming in your young life now. Your heart is not yet old enough to know the pure feeling, *love*. No, that fragrant, unfading blossom has not yet brightened the green valleys of your soul; and, with your blinded vision, you call those coquettish, changing, impulsive, ever blooming, ever withering passion-flowers, *love*. So three-fourths of the world do. Many, oh, how many, hearts have cast their destinies as the passion-flowers directed, and then, when disgust and weariness come, they say love blinded

them. No, no, passion blinds, but love makes us see clearly—discovers new and ever-gushing sources of happiness that blind passion would have trampled heedlessly upon. Every heart, in the hey-day of youth's exciting hour has its passion dream; but, alas, how very few wake to the sweet joy of a realization of love's dreamings!

"I wish I *had* a sweetheart," soliloquized Estelle, "Em Terence used to look so happy over her love letters, and she used to try her fortune so anxiously, and finally she married. What a great thing love must be! *Her* lover was poor, and, *I* thought, horridly hateful, yet she ran off with him because she said she just couldn't live away from him!"

"Ah, Estelle, another passion-flower! Beware of them, child!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE STAPLEFORDS.

Stapleford mansion was a tall, showy, pretentious affair. Good index of the character of its inhabitants—*showy!* That describes them exactly!

Mrs. Stapleford was one of your quiet, indolent, amiable women. She felt the importance of that lately put-up three-story brick house—and seemed to consider it sufficient honor and glory to excuse her from ever making a sensible remark, or commit-

ing a generous action. Her father had amassed a comfortable fortune, by unwearied penuriousness, and genteel swindling. This she considered something so remarkable, that "pappy" was her favorite theme of conversation.

Mr. Stapleford was a pompous piece of absurdity, who appeared to be constantly admiring his own dignity.

Joanna's younger sister, Eliza Ellen, seemed to consider it the chief end and aim of her existence to impress visitors with the importance of the Stapleford family. Oswald Stapleford, the pride of Stapleford mansion, was tall and graceful; with "glorious haunting eyes," Estelle mentally affirmed, as she crimsoned beneath their admiring gaze. Willard Dutton saw the blush, the glance, the quivering smile; noted all, and the sarcastic sneer deepened on his face, as he mused bitterly, on a time when a once worshipped face blushed and quivered 'neath his gaze.

They all sat in the parlor, after tea, and Joanna, delighted that Oswald and Estelle had so "taken to each other," as she phrased it, turned with a new accession of amiability to Willard Dutton. That gentleman, however, was barely civil; "horribly indifferent," Joanna thought as he sat watching Estelle and young Stapleford, and wishing, with Fanny Fern, "that one half the world warn't fools and the other half idiots."

They say sorrow softens the heart. Why, then,

was Willard Dutton so cold and stern, and misanthropic?

Ah, he had spent his life sorrowing over wounds from the passion-flowers he had called *love*. He didn't believe there was any *reality* called love, and it made him angry to see those "little simpletons," as he mentally termed Estelle and Oswald, so deluded.

'Twas gratifying, in the extreme, to Joanna Stapleford; as exciting as a romance to the insipid little piece of affectation denominated "Eliza Ellen." Amusing to the Staplefords in general, but a most ineffable bore to Mr. Willard Dutton, to observe the "love making" of Estelle and Oswald. It neither amused nor interested him, to see Estelle's face brighten and quiver, if a well known footstep approached. It was no curiosity for him to see two sentimental simpletons, with clasped hands, moon gazing. Then, such a ridiculous way they had of cutting their names, in the most loving proximity, on every tree that would receive such treatment by presenting a smooth surface; of marking every scrap of sentimental poetry that fell into their insane hands. Then, such "idiotic glances," Willard thought, as they were continually casting at each other, in utter obliviousness of any criticising eyes. Then, too, they had brief seasons of pique, during which time, Estelle would wear the most woebegone countenance imaginable, out of Oswald's presence, but no sooner did he appear than she

became extremely loquacious, evincing a lively interest in the fate of every one save only Oswald. As to whether he "sank or swam, lived or died, survived or perished," she appeared perfectly indifferent. While Oswald by turns grew cold and freezingly polite, then cross and nervous, then anxious and unhappy, and finally evinced such a world of penitent tenderness that Estelle would occasionally look at him when he was talking, and the next thing Stapleford household knew, Estelle and Oswald would be walking up the avenue, timid and happy. To a novel-reader all this would have been interesting in the extreme.

Willard Dutton didn't read novels. Romance was his abomination; sentiment he detested; love he knew, by experience, to be a mocking humbug: *ergo*, the "daily walk and conversation" of Estelle and Oswald he considered an unendurable nuisance.

"I've been here nearly two weeks," he muttered, savagely, "watching the little idiot lead on that fellow, just as Harriet Richards used to lead me on! What a stereotyped farce this love-making is! Wonder how I could have been insane enough to enjoy it! Ah, it takes years to bring wisdom!"

Willard Dutton straightened his noble form, and tried to feel a satisfaction that he had gained this "wisdom"; but somehow he wouldn't care if he could just feel the old thrilling rapture of his early manhood once more, just to see how it felt. He had almost forgotten.

"Bah!" he muttered, savagely striking the clover blossoms with his cane, "I used to feel it a seventh heaven to have hold of her soft, deceitful fingers; and I always had a discontented feeling away from her, and a restless, impulsive, thumping heart in her presence, and to see her only aggravated me. I couldn't bear to think of her experiencing any emotion I didn't share; and I felt an incipient desire to tyrannize, like wringing out from her being every other feeling but love for me. I felt strong enough to move the universe for her sake. Bah! I was an unmitigated donkey! I should have tired of her by this time. No doubt we'd have pouted and quarreled and outlived life's romance in six months."

Ah, Willard Dutton! Those old passion-flowers —why will you cling so to the memory of them? Why refuse to believe life has anything more beautiful and substantial to offer?

Estelle would have been contented to linger forever at Stapleford mansion, enchanted with the gaudy blossoms in her heart that, to her blinded vision, were radiant and beautiful; but a letter arrived from Cedar Hill, bearing the intelligence that Dr. Newman had been suddenly taken ill; and urging Estelle's immediate return home.

"Mr. Dutton will, for the sake of his friendship for your father, no doubt accompany you home," wrote Mrs. Newman, bitterly underlining "your father," as if conscious *she* possessed nothing that

would bring him to Cedar Hill, neither friendship, gratitude, nor even cold esteem.

Estelle was immediately bathed in tears because she said "Dear father was sick;" but Willard Dutton told some invisible listener that he knew "the little idiot was only crying because she must leave the black eyes of Oswald Stapleford."

It did seem to him, anyhow, that 'twas a woman's nature to be deceitful!

Why couldn't the unsophisticated little lunatic confess at once that her vanity craved Oswald's absurd extravagancies?

"Human nature! The more he contemplated it, the more disgusted he became!" he solemnly averred, as he went down to the grape arbor and sat down, hidden by the overhanging foliage.

"Estelle, dear Estelle! you won't quite forget me when we are separated, will you?"

"How absurd!" thought Willard Dutton, as he perceived that Estelle and Oswald were looking as miserable as it was possible for them to look. With a contemptuous sneer he listened for Estelle's answer, and when he heard her sob he felt like getting up and shaking her for the unnecessary proceeding.

"Tell me, Estelle darling, will you forget me?"

("The hypocrite knows she won't!" thought Willard.)

"Oh, Oswald, dear Oswald, how can I ever forget you?"

("How indeed?" sneered Mr. Willard Dutton.)

"Estelle, my own Estelle, I shall be miserable without you!"

("Actually a pound of tartar emetic couldn't affect me any more," groaned the agonized listener.)

I don't think it was any regard for their unappreciative listener's tartar-emetic emotions that drew the lovers to another part of the garden, and though, after they left, Mr. Willard Dutton tried to persuade himself he experienced decided relief, yet he couldn't help but "wonder what the lunatics said next!"

This interesting knowledge was probably spared him by some accommodating genius who understood, appreciated and respected Mr. Willard Dutton's nerves.

'Twas early next morning when they took the stage for Louisville. Joanna charged Estelle not to forget her, but fixed her eyes upon Mr. Dutton as she spoke. He smiled, and good-humoredly made some playful remark about "A green spot in Memory's waste," at the same time ridiculing himself for the absurdity.

Estelle sobbed and cried, and made a hundred vows of love; to Joanna with her lips, to Oswald with her eyes, while that disconsolate young gentleman perpetrated any amount of sighs and mournfully tender glances.

"The puppy!" thought Willard, helping Estelle into the stage, and himself closing the door with a bang.

"I just think Mr. Dutton is the most detestable piece of flesh I ever did hate!" was Estelle's mentally delivered opinion as she gave that person's foot a spiteful little kick, and seemed trying to experiment as to how small a space it was possible for her to occupy, in order to put as much distance as was possible between herself and "that bear," as she termed Willard.

There she sat sobbing, and pouting, and fanning the frowns of vexations upon her heated brow, and, in every way, exhibiting her uncomfortable feelings.

Mr. Dutton was cool as an iceberg. Once or twice he made faint attempts toward a conversation, but Estelle's monosyllables, and newly acquired dignity, was not striking for evincing a desire to aid him in the laudable attempt.

At length, as if wearied by her obstinacy, he took a newspaper from the pocket of his linen-duster, and began to regale himself with the latest items of interest.

"The horrid old savage! How I should like to pinch him!" thought Estelle, seemingly making an effort to chew the ivory handle of her parasol.

A boat would not leave for Livingston that evening, so they would be obliged to spend a night in Louisville. Willard communicated this information as tenderly as if informing her that it would be necessary to remove her to a lunatic asylum for the rest of her life; and, indeed, Estelle could

scarcely have received it with more ungraciousness than she did the announcement that she should be dependent on Mr. Dutton for entertainment an evening longer than she had screwed up her nerve and fortitude to endure.

Estelle had a truly feminine propensity to cry, and forthwith began to indulge in that most interesting of employments.

"My dear child ——" began Willard.

"His dear *child*, indeed!" sneered Estelle.

"You must learn to bear patiently the ills of this life."

"Nobody wants any of your preaching," was Estelle's mental comment as, in revenge for his unbearable condescension, she planted the heel of her new gaiter upon the faint outline of Mr. Willard Dutton's toe. He, however, took no notice of this proceeding, and Estelle experienced a feeling somewhat similar to what she imagined the fly must have felt when being assured by the ox that its weight had not been perceived.

It was night when they arrived at Cedar Hill. Disdaining Mr. Dutton's proffered assistance, Estelle sprung lightly from the carriage, and a moment later was sobbing by the bedside of her father. Dr. Newman appeared some better than he had been, the nurse told Estelle, but she must not excite him, as every thing depended on perfect quiet.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Willard!"

"Mrs. Newman!"

'Twas all they said as they clasped hands in Cedar Hill drawing room. *He* was very calm, but oh, the passion-flowers were not all dead in the woman's heart yet. She had cherished them too tenderly to let anything purer grow there. How it maddened her to see that cold, proud face, whose silent sarcasm said, "Because of your perfidy I have hated womankind! Because of the dazzling heights to which you led me, and from which you threw me into the deep vales of despair, I have cast out every feeling of love and hope and trust toward your kind."

There was no word spoken to tell of this; but Harriet Newman read it on the calm face clearly as if an angel had revealed it unto her.

Dr. Newman continued to grow worse; and on the evening of the tenth day Willard Dutton called Estelle into the library. She had been forbidden, at her father's request, to enter the sick chamber, as the fever was contagious. Suspense and anxiety had made her nervous and pale, and her heart beat painfully as Willard began,

"Estelle, little Estelle, you remember the first time I ever saw you, how you let me comfort you in

that childish grief! I have loved you ever since, as if you had been my little sister. Won't you be brave now and trust me when I tell you I will watch over you tenderly as if you were the child of my dead mother?"

What did it mean?—that long, affectionate speech from cold Mr. Dutton! Estelle looked up wonderingly, and seeing the yearning look of compassion upon his face, she comprehended all as if by intuition, and with a low, wailing shriek, moaned,

"Oh, Mr. Dutton, my father is dead! I know now what you mean by all that!"

"Estelle, my poor child!"

His voice was husky with its trembling weight of unshed tears.

"Mother's dead, and father's gone too; and now I've nobody to love me—nobody to care for me!"

"Estelle—little Estelle! *I* will love you, and take care of you all the days of my life. Your father gave you into my charge, and I will try to be faithful to the trust! Do you believe me, Estelle?"

She only sobbed and moaned with the helpless tears raining over her face that was very pale, with the woe of its desolate orphanage.

Willard Dutton lingered at Cedar Hill. He had been chosen guardian for the children of Dr. Newman, and he wished to help settle up the affairs of the deceased as much as possible. He had spoken nothing save the most common civilities, to Mrs. Newman, since her husband's death, and while *she*

was longing for the brief year of mourning to be gone, *he* was making arrangements to buy Cedar Hill for himself and a widowed great-aunt, who would keep house for him. Harriet Newman entered not into his calculations. No—the old passion-flowers his heart once cherished were dead, quite dead. Mrs. Newman was going to the Northern part of Kentucky to spend the ensuing fall and winter with a sister of hers, whom she was quite certain would be completely overawed by her stylish mourning suit. Poor human nature! Estelle was to remain at Cedar Hill with Mr. Dutton, who had invited Joanna and Oswald Stapleford to spend the following winter, and perhaps divert, in some measure, Estelle's mind from her grief. When he told Estelle what he had done, she put her hand in his, and said, in the excess of her gratitude,

"Mr. Dutton, you are very kind, and I *do* love you, even if I have seemed unmindful of all your goodness!"

Had Mr. Dutton been more susceptible and less experienced, he might have felt a queer thumping in the region of his heart, when this announcement was made by "sweet sixteen's" rosy lips, while her hand kept up a continued pressure that seemed to betray a regard bewildering in the extreme; but Mr. Willard Dutton had gone through the interestingly enlightening process sometimes denominated "cutting his eye teeth,"—*ergo*, he knew she was only expressing her gratitude for the prospect of seeing Oswald.

Joanna Stapleford came with a fascinatingly sympathetic expression of countenance, got up for the occasion, to be cast off so soon as she considered it prudent to do so. Oswald wore a subdued air of tenderness which Estelle thought "touching" in the extreme. At last her heart testified to its appreciation of it by a succession of throbs that would have seemed, to one unacquainted with its idiocyncrasies, an attempt to hammer itself out.

One, two, three months the guests lingered, and Mrs. Prather, the housekeeper, declared she thought "them Staplefords was making a *visitation*, sure enough."

Joanna was using her best efforts to captivate Mr. Dutton, but though that gentleman listened amiably to her remarks, and though the young lady wrote home every other week that "Mr. Dutton had been on the point of proposing several times, when something interrupted him," yet it would appear, that mysterious "*something*" still continued, without any alleged reason, to interrupt him, for no letter arrived at Stapleford mansion informing them of Joanna's permanent residence at Cedar Hill.

Although 'twas December, the day was bright and loving as a young mother's smile over the face of her first-born. Mr. Dutton sat alone in the library, and through the open window came the soft winds, as if whispering that spring had come on a visit to winter. But not of this was he thinking. Oswald had asked his consent to make Estelle his

wife. Mr. Dutton had declined giving his answer until he should have a private interview with her; so, while the spring sunbeams, that had wandered down to December, leaped in warm radiance through the long avenue, Willard sat waiting for an answer to his summons. She came at last, orphan Estelle, blushing and trembling, and wondering whether she was most miserable or happy. A kind of *uncertain* feeling had possession of her—she could not describe it.

"Estelle," he began, "there are a great many unhappy marriages in the world."

("All old bachelors think that," affirmed some inward oracle in whom Estelle had the most sublime faith.)

"Well," she said impatiently, as if to shorten the pause he had made, as if to regard the effect of his words.

"This arises in some measure," he continued, apparently unmindful of Estelle's impatience, "from having mistaken a fleeting fancy for an abiding affection. Very young persons should not trust too much to their impulses, but should wait until the voice of reason and *matured intellect* shall guide them."

"I suppose that's the reason *you've* waited so long—you hard-hearted old savage," thought the young girl. She was nervous, and almost without willing it, the words crossed her lips. "Well—please Mr. Dutton, excuse me from any farther dis-

sertation on this subject; and give me a decided answer."

A painful flush swept the proud paleness of Willard Dutton's face at these words, and he said almost sternly,

"Your dying father appointed me your guardian, Estelle."

The tones touched her heart. The pale, solemn face, from which the transient flush had faded, filled her with remorse, and bursting into tears she sank down on a low stool at his feet and sobbed "Forgive me, Mr. Dutton, I'm nervous and sick; and I'm miserable anyhow."

"My poor child!" Willard's hand, moving over the soft bands of her hair, said this quite as much as his tones did and feeling both, Estelle's face grew soft, almost tender with gratitude.

"I only desire your happiness, my child. If you will wait a year, and then desire to marry Oswald Stapleford, I will not oppose you; but now you are too young. Will you wait, little girl?"

"Yes," she answered, almost glad, she knew not why, that he had suggested this waiting a year. In that time she could analyze the great burden of her heart, and see whether it was love, or joy, or wretchedness that weighed so heavily.

On learning Estelle's intention to wait a year, Oswald determined to leave Cedar Hill so soon as the next boat should start for Louisville. In vain did Joanna entreat him to stay two weeks longer.

She was certain Mr. Dutton would come to the point in that time; but that gentleman possessed Oswald's most cordial animosity, and spite of Joanna's assertion that he was a "splendid catch," Oswald wrote that the Stapleford family might expect them that day two weeks. Joanna was in despair, and finding threats and entreaties of no avail, resorted to tears. Mr. Dutton felt called upon to inquire if he could relieve her distress.

"No, no," she said mournfully, yet experiencing an unconquerable desire to wring Willard's nose for his stupidity in not proposing. "I hope you'll remember, when I'm gone, that I enjoyed myself here very much; and shall be ever grateful for your kind hospitality!" sobbed Joanna.

Mr. Dutton looked as if he didn't exactly understand the *necessity* of remembering this, nevertheless he bowed and "hoped she would visit there often, as her society seemed to be conducive to *Estelle's* happiness."

"You horrid savage!" muttered Joanna, as Willard left the room to attend to something that Mrs. Prather said needed his assistance.

"That hateful Mrs. Prather! she is the most vigilant old duenna I ever did see!" was Joanna's privately delivered opinion of the worthy personage who considered it her duty to "keep an eye on Willard, lest he should make a fool of himself by proposing to that Stapleford girl."

When Oswald first declared his intention of

leaving Cedar Hill, he had given a half-dignified promise to write to Estelle; but, when the morning of his departure arrived, his dignity melted 'neath the warmth of his tenderness like snow in the sunshine, and he entreated Estelle, in the most pathetic tones, to remain faithful to him, and to write every week.

Joanna assured Mr. Dutton she should leave her heart at "Cedar Hill." This information, interesting though it was, produced no other feeling in the gentleman's breast than a momentary wonder in what particular spot the young lady would leave the enormous article that he had no doubt, from its size and extreme susceptibility, was rather troublesome to carry. Of this, however, Mr. Dutton gave no expression, merely hoping, in a half playful tone, "that she would feel the loss of it so much as to induce a speedy return to Cedar Hill."

"I would like to know, for curiosity, just how thick your skull is," mentally affirmed Joanna, as she bade Willard "farewell," in the ladies' cabin of steamer C———.

This important information being denied her, she began reproaching Oswald for his haste in leaving Cedar Hill.

"Hurry, indeed!" growled Oswald, "it lacks only two weeks of being four months that we staid there. If a man can't propose in that time he's too slow to talk about! Estelle didn't stay at our house but two weeks, and *I* thought it quite long enough for me to express my mind in regard to her!"

Joanna was not convinced, and ventured to explain to Oswald.

"In going up a flight of steps—if one should become weary and jump off at *next to the last step*, he would not reach the beauties of the upper chamber after all his labor. So, although we did stay a long time, yet one week more might have been the *last step*, that would have placed me mistress of Cedar Hill!"

"Nonsense, Sis, Willard Dutton is too long a step-ladder for you to attempt climbing. You had as well give up first as last," growled Oswald, as he walked away, leaving Joanna to "chew the cud of bitter fancies!"

CHAPTER IX.

MR. WILLARD DUTTON'S DEFINITION OF LOVE AND PASSION.

"I don't think love is such a great thing after all, as I imagined," soliloquized Estelle, as she tore up the envelope of Oswald's last letter, in a kind of absent minded way. "When Oswald was here, I was always wondering how I looked, and if he had found out any of my faults; and I was nervous and restless any how. Now it's so nice and quiet reading in the library, to Mr. Dutton, or taking horseback rides, or pleasant walks. Then my face don't feel always so uncomfortably warm, as it did when

Oswald was here. Dear Oswald, I *do* love him better than anybody else; and when we are married I'll get Mr. Dutton to let us live here, so that when Oswald goes away from home, I can have a nice, quiet time, reading and writing, and talking in the library, with Mr. Dutton, like I do now!"

Oswald's letters came regularly, full of the most ardent protestations of affection, and never failing to make what he invariably declared to be, a "vain attempt" to describe his loneliness and desolation out of her angelic presence. All this was very entertaining, and never failed to make Estelle happy and boisterous; yet sometimes she did wish he would leave out just a little "love," and write something intellectual and elevating, such as Mr. Dutton talked.

"Pshaw! Mr. Dutton is so much older! Oswald is not twenty-one yet! How could I expect him to talk so now? After a while when he gets older, when our honeymoon is over, and there'll be nothing to separate us any more, then he will talk to me of mind, and books, and religion!"

And Estelle's higher nature looked off with more eagerness to this sweet period than to the romance and excitement of the honeymoon.

Sometimes, after grasping the brilliant thoughts and beautiful truths of Willard Dutton's mind, she would seize her pen and write in a more noble and intellectual strain than was her wont. She would tell Oswald how she was longing to improve and

elevate the intellect God had given her. She would ask almost pleadingly, did not *his* mind grasp continually after something higher and more ennobling than it had ever known? Feverishly would she await his answer, only to turn with a sigh and a tear, half mingled with a flushing smile of tenderness, as she read,

"Your *love*, Estelle, is sufficient for me. I can repose contentedly in it, desiring nothing more. Never mind cultivating your *head;* only *cultivate your heart* for me, darling!"

Sometimes she would write two or three of those soul-letters in succession; then a wild reproach would come from Oswald that she did not love him.

"He could tell it from the cold, intellectual letters that came from her head, not from her heart."

Poor Estelle! What should she do? Mr. Dutton generally read her letters. He never asked to, but somehow he always looked at them so wistfully that she couldn't well avoid letting him see them. How could she let him see nothing but sentiment —nothing but stale repititions of a "love" that was sometimes half tiresome. She *would* write something that would make him look at her with one of his rare, beautiful smiles, even if Oswald did upbraid her.

This young gentleman becoming offended at her persistent disregard of his wishes, ceased his tender upbraidings, and maintained a freezing formal-

ity so distressing that Estelle returned to the old style of sentiment.

'Twas a damp, rainy evening in the fickle spring-time. A fire was burning in the library; and Mr. Dutton sat wrapped in a reverie that, judging from the slight contraction of his brow and the restless motion of his fingers, was half painful.

"May I come in, Mr. Dutton?"

It was Estelle's voice at the door, and as its trembling, discontented cadence floated in, he started with surprise as he answered,

"Yes."

She sat down upon a low seat at his side, and leaning her head against the arm of his chair, burst into tears.

"What is it, little girl?" he asked, taking hold of the hand that lay in tempting proximity to his own.

"You are a great deal older than I am," she began, hesitatingly.

"No one could, I believe, be inclined to doubt that," quietly remarked the gentleman addressed, while the faintest gleam of a smile half brightened, half shadowed his mouth.

"Well do tell me why people get so tired of each other after they marry?" asked Estelle, choking down a sob.

"You are aware, I suppose, that I don't know this fact by *actual experience*," answered Willard, while the shadowy smile deepened into positive triumph that this was the fact.

"Don't trifle with me, Mr. Dutton! Please tell me why it is? You'll die after a while just as father did; and oh, when you're gone, and I've nobody to talk to me, what should I do if Oswald got tired of me? Please tell me why people get tired of each other, and I'll try to prevent our getting that way!"

Willard Dutton smoothed back the soft hair from her forehead and commenced very deliberately,

"For some years I had ridiculed the feeling denominated Love. I had no faith in it, and felt a proud ability to live without it. I looked upon the discontented faces of married couples as only proofs what a sublime humbug the whole thing was! But of late I have thought and read much upon the subject) and will give you what is merely my opinion. You can, of course, accept it at its true value."

He paused a moment as if shrinking from giving expression to the sacred thoughts that were very deep down.

"Go on," said Estelle, breathlessly.

He released her hand, leaned back farther into the depths of that old arm chair, and continued, with the air of one talking more to himself than any one else,

"There are, I think, in every heart two angels, Love and Passion. Passion spreads her gaudy wings and wraps the heart in a wild, intoxicating dream of bliss, whose presiding genius is some mortal invested with supernatural perfection. No fault, no evidence of frail humanity is allowed to present itself and prevent the intoxicated heart from kneeling in wild worship to this image. The angel Love stands afar off, with meekly folded wings, waiting to see if the foolish heart will be satisfied with that insane ecstasy which has no reason in it—no sure foundation for its duration, but is like the phantasmagoria of a dream. Nine-tenths of the world call this Love. Coarser minds would perhaps prefer it to Love; but after marriage, when there are no exciting separations and jealous doubts to keep up the romance and uncertainty, Passion's work is done. She strips the gilded figure of its beauties, shows all the deformities she once hid so carefully, and so weariness, and disgust, and unhappiness follow. But should a good Providence so chasten the heart as to drive from its pure precincts the gaudy Passion-wings and gilded idol, then the angel Love unplumes her snowy pinions over the yearning heart. She does not hide a loved one's faults, but with the imperfections shows, too, the great shining virtues that dwell with these evidences of humanity. The heart does not leap and flutter, and bound suddenly into a wild ecstasy merely from a word or glance, as when shadowed

by Passion's wings. No, Love plants a tiny sprig, and frequent intercourse of congenial natures, with a firm golden link of religion binding them, will draw the two souls together until the little plant has grown and flourished in eternal beauty and fragrance. Reaching out its wide-spreading roots gradually, mind, *not suddenly*, until they embrace every fibre, and have grown with the very life-cords of one's being. Thus it is, while Passion dies, Love is a blossom that no life-tempest may blight or injure. It smiles in the sunshine of Prosperity, lifts up proudly its noble head, defying the storms of Adversity, and drops from its pure petals, over earth's dark places, a shining light that is like unto nothing save the morning light of eternity."

He paused. The firelight burned dimly—the rain beat against the window-pane, and over Estelle's face gushed tears from some unsealed, unhidden fountain, as she asked,

"Did you ever love anybody, Mr. Dutton?"

"Every heart has its passion-dream," he answered, evasively.

"But *could* you love anybody?" she persisted.

"Perhaps so," he replied, smiling. "Could you?"

"Oh yes. I've felt this love-angel standing back in a sacred corner of my heart, but I didn't know what it was. Oh, Mr. Dutton, I want to love somebody, but I don't know who to love."

She spoke impulsively, never thinking how it sounded, and for the moment forgetting Oswald Stapleford.

"When 'Our Father' tells the love-angel in your heart to plant the Eternity blossom, 'twill be done. Wait patiently, my child, and do not be contented with the fading glory of a passion-dream."

He spoke solemnly, with a radiance shining over his face like a bright reflection from the love-angel's wings. They had both forgotten Oswald. Estelle was the first to remember him, and she asked timidly,

"Do I love Oswald Stapleford, Mr. Dutton?"

A darkness came over his face as he answered,

"You must be the judge of your own heart, my child!"

An impartial judge she was, indeed, with that same heart thumping, and throbbing, and aching, and reproaching her for wanting some excuse to break off her engagement with Oswald. Of course 'twas *love* she felt for him, if not, she had been a most arrant little hypocrite. How often she had told Oswald she loved him better than any one else! What did she mean by all that? conscience demanded sternly! How much better would she feel after she had broken Oswald's heart? It continued, and if she didn't marry Oswald, whom would she marry? Would she be an old maid? And when Mr. Dutton got old and died, as her father did, she would be homeless and friendless. 'Twas a woman's destiny to marry! So Estelle reasoned, and that night a letter went out to Oswald tender enough to suit even his fastidious fancy.

Willard Dutton read it over, and wondered if his story about love and passion was not, after all, a delusive humbug. Yes, he was certain it was. "And yet," he soliloquized, "'twas rather a pleasant fancy."

After this he grew colder and sterner than ever, and Estelle could not but congratulate herself that she had not cast off Oswald's love as a passion. And yet there were times when she felt great needs in her woman's nature that nothing she had ever known could satisfy. There were some heart-hymns whose grand, sacred harmony seemed ever calling out for a response, ever seeking to penetrate the shining gateway of stars, until an answering music should fill up the solemn waiting of its tender pauses. Mr. Dutton decided that they should visit "Crab Orchard" when the days grew tender and loving with June sunbeams. Estelle was pleased with the idea of going, for though the honeysuckles drooped their golden and crimson bloom over the long galleries, and though the roses budded and blossomed like fair young cheeks in the morning of life; yet Mr. Dutton had grown very cold and silent. Oswald had exhausted his vocabulary of endearing epithets, so Estelle longed for a change.

She had become restless and nervous of late, and Mr. Dutton thought 'twould be an advantage for her to leave the monotony of "Cedar Hill." A letter was immediately dispatched to Oswald, stating, that as "Crab Orchard" was not far distant

from Stapleford mansion, they would probably visit there before their return home. The gay scenes in which they mingled would be tedious in detail. Estelle had wealth, *ergo*, many admirers, as wealth in Kentucky is the chief attraction, and yet after spending a whole evening conversing with the butterflies of fashion, she would turn away weary and disgusted at finding that she had gained not a single new idea nor lofty inspiration.

Ah! Ball-room conversations were quite different affairs from the quiet, invigorating chats in Cedar Hill library. Sometimes she would turn to Mr. Dutton with a great craving for some thought-gems like unto those which brightened memory's face with a radiance beautiful as a first-born's smile in a mother's heart. And yet, in spite of her pleading look, Mr. Dutton would sometimes turn half impatiently and beckon Oswald to take charge of her. 'Twas mortifying to be treated like a troublesome child, but Estelle remembered too many of her willful, childish whims, to feel it injustice. And looking at the proud, elegant man of the world, who bore so indifferently the determined feminine attacks made upon his heart, Estelle wondered if that *could* be the same Mr. Dutton whom she had sometimes imagined did really love her as a little sister. Then he had, after all, only read and talked to her because she was dependent upon him for entertainment, and not because she was intelligent enough to render herself agreeable to him. Now that she

had others to amuse and interest, he seemed almost oblivious of her existence.

These were a few of Estelle's cogitations, and is it strange that every thing soon became "stale," "stereotyped," "insipid," and that with a pout and a sigh, she entreated Mr. Dutton to leave for Cedar Hill? She was worn out, she said, too much fatigued to enjoy a visit to the Stapleford's.

Mr. Dutton bore her impatience very calmly, merely remarking that 'twould not be convenient to leave for a day or two, as he had received a letter from Mrs. Newman, stating that she would meet them at the Springs, and return with them to Cedar Hill.

She made no reply, but the mellow moonlight, whose soft smiles rippled over the summer hills, knew that Estelle sobbed bitterly in the solitude of her chamber. She was "tired," she said, *so tired* of every thing and everybody; and, like an estranged friend come back from a distant land, to bind up the broken links of love, an old memory came from the far country of her life's morning, and again she was yearning, as in the old child-days, to lie down in the arms that were folded under the clover blossoms, close beside another grave, her father's!

"Mother, father, if your little Estelle had only died, too!" she murmured, while tears trembled over the fevered, flushing of her cheek, like summer rain over the honeysuckles at Cedar Hill.

Mrs. Newman did not announce, to impatient

Estelle, her readiness to leave Crab Orchard, for more than a week after her arrival there.

Oswald Stapleford did not accompany Estelle home, as had been his intention, for the morning before their departure he received a letter, telling of his mother's sudden illness, and requesting his immediate presence.

Mrs. Newman had arrived at the full maturity of her beauty, and when this is considered in addition to her *golden* charms, it is not strange that she, too, attracted much admiration. Yet turning from it all she sought only the approval of one who alone seemed indifferent to her fascinations.

"Cedar Hill," she declared, "looked so natural and home-like, that 'twas refreshing to be there again."

She had left her noisy children with her sister, lest their ungoverned tempers, and unruly behavior should make Willard shrink from the responsibility of a closer relation.

Estelle devoted herself to her studies, and correspondence with Oswald. Mrs. Newman made the house echo with her music, and seemed constantly seeking some additional charm in dress or manner, that would captivate Willard, who seemed to find no enjoyment in this life, save in solitary strolls, fishing excursions, and such employments as forbade Mrs. Newman and Estelle's accompanying him.

The July morning broke into a smile of joy and

beauty over the hill-tops and valleys. Mr. Willard Dutton sat alone in the library, close by a low window, through which the morning winds came as if to tell their story of the sweets they had gathered. There was a light tap on the door, and then Mrs. Newman entered.

Leaning her wistful face over the balustrade, Estelle saw the figure enter the library, and, without knowing why, a sharp agony settled over the still shadows of her face. Back she turned, going very slowly to the seat that she had left, when she heard Mrs. Newman in the hall below. She sat down and, with mechanical calmness, took up the book she had lain down.

The sunbeams glistened and flashed as if in joy for the bright day that was born unto the earth. The sweet summer winds came up laden with bird-music and flower-fragrance; yet the radiance of the sunlight seemed to Estelle like the flash and glitter of a cruel knife held over her life-cords. The morning winds seemed a cold shiver, as if from touching a newly shrouded corpse; and the soft bird-music a low requiem over a fresh-made grave. She sat feeling this "unlanguaged pain," and when an hour later Mrs. Newman came up and said, "Congratulate me, Estelle, Willard and I are to be married a month from to-day," she did not grow any whiter, nor see any darker deeps in the open grave that yawned in her heart, waiting for its burden. She had known it from intuition, and a confirmation of it by words did not startle her.

"Don't speak of it to Willard, darling, he is so fastidious about such things!" said Mrs. Newman.

Estelle made no reply, but drawing from her smallest finger the ring Willard had given her on a never-to-be-forgotten morning, she went down into the library, and said,

"Here is the ring you once gave me with a contract. I ought to have given it back to you long ago."

Then some withered leaves of Hope and Joy fluttered into the hidden grave.

Mr. Dutton scarcely looked up from his writing as he said,

"Put it down! 'Tis no matter!"

"*No matter*" to him—no. But Estelle went slowly down, the worn way of the years that had passed, to the morning when he gave her that ring, and gathering up, from all that crowded the land of the Past, that one sacred hour of her existence, she carried it up tenderly to the Present, caressing it fondly, with memory's quivering kisses, and then casting it, too, upon the withered leaves, that had drifted into the open grave, very far down.

"Oh, Willard Dutton! Willard Dutton," she murmured, "Why did you tell me of the two angels in my heart? Then Oswald's love—my own sweet, transient dream would have sufficed!"

CHAPTER X.

DENOUEMENT.

'Twas a long tear-stained sheet, beseeching Oswald Stapleford to search his own heart thoroughly and see if he could love her all the days of his life, and at last, when he laid her down beside her mother, look through quivering tears upon the face he had never wearied of? When she was sick, and tired, and lonesome, would he hold her in his arms and smile down tenderly in her face, and "oh, Oswald, Oswald," she pleaded, "when I am dead will you sometimes yearn to gaze down upon the still face that the Autumn grasses will hide from you? Tell me this, Oswald, for the burden of life presses very heavily upon my soul to-day?" She waited three weeks for an answer, and then it came.

Wearying of her capricious moods, her long periods of neglect, her "*head-letters*," Oswald wrote, that though he loved her very dearly as a sister-friend, yet a new and stronger affection had awakened up in his heart for one whose nature was nearer akin to his own—"more ardent, more affectionate, and more *expressive* than Estelle's," he wrote.

She was standing on one of the long honeysuckle draped galleries—and, as she finished reading the letter, Mr. Dutton heard a low shriek of anguish, and a moment later he bore a light, insensible form into the nearest room. Mrs. Newman followed, bearing the letter, whose contents she scanned

eagerly, and held up to Willard, triumphantly, to show how dearly Estelle had loved Oswald Stapleford.

"Poor child! The human heart never knows but one love, the love of its youth!" said Mrs. Newman, glancing toward Willard as she bent over the white face of orphan Estelle.

"'Tis false!" exclaimed Willard Dutton, imperatively, with a stamp of his foot that showed how the great deeps of his nature were stirred.

Mrs. Newman looked up with a pale, sarcastic smile. Willard answered it with an angry brow, then went into the library, leaving Mrs. Newman to restore the stricken girl.

After this, Estelle was very quiet. The old childish fretfulness was all gone. The eager sparkle went out from her eyes, and the glad flushing from her cheek. She never spoke of Oswald. She only wrote, in answer to his letter, "You are free! May God grant you the sunshine of life. ESTELLE!"

"She *did love* him, after all," said Willard Dutton, as he saw how pale and penitent she grew, while a soft ethereal radiance bathed her face like summer starlight.

"Poor child! From a passion dream there comes an awakening—but a *love* dream only the morning light of eternity may dispel!" After this soliloquy Willard grew more tender and thoughtful of Estelle's comfort. Now he would take her riding and walking, and though Mrs. Newman always accom-

panied them, yet he ever turned to Estelle with the forbearing consideration that one would have shown to a child. And though her smile was very faint and solemn, struggling through her tears like a sad moonbeam through the lilies over her dead mother's grave, yet she was very grateful for Willard's kindness, and ventured to ask,

"Mr. Dutton, when you are married, may I live with you?"

He started, as if from a reverie, and answered, "Yes, little Estelle, you may live with me always!"

Mr. Willard Dutton had spent the long, bright evening at the village, and when he returned, instead of going into the house, he thought he would sit down under the soft baptismals of honeysuckle fragrance. The long, low windows of the drawing-room were open. Mrs. Newman was caroling a gay song, and as she ceased Willard heard Estelle's voice break up eager and pleading, "Oh, Cousin Hattie," (she had called her this since Dr. Newman's death,) "you *do* love Mr. Dutton very much, don't you?"

"Why, certainly!" Mrs. Newman replied.

Estelle went on, with a voice that to Willard Dutton was the sweetest heart-hymn he had ever heard.

"His love is the brightest treasure the world can ever bring. You will prize it as you should, won't you? You will try to make him happy, and never, never prefer your own will to his? Promise me this!"

"Certainly, child, if it will afford you any satisfaction," returned Mrs. Newman carelessly.

"Oh, Cousin Hattie! he is so noble, so good, so worthy of a life's devotion! Oh, say you will never turn impatiently from his caresses, as you sometimes did from father's!"

Mrs. Newman flushed and said, "Certainly not!"

"And when I'm sleeping with mother and father you will tell him how my mother's wings smiled over him when he was so good to her orphan child. And, oh! you will tell him how grateful I was, and how some day in Heaven my father will say, 'Willard Dutton, you have been *faithful* to the trust I reposed in you.' You will tell him all this, Cousin Hattie, won't you? *I've* tried to tell him, but somehow the tears choke me so I cannot talk to him!"

"Yes, yes, I'll tell him all," she answered, and Willard got up softly and entered his favorite haunt, the library. They did not hear him go in, and half an hour later, when Estelle had been to return a book she had been reading, somebody said, "Estelle, little Estelle," and she felt her two hands prisoned. 'Twas Mr. Dutton that held her hands, and he that said, "The eternity blossom is blooming fresh, and fair, and fragrant in my heart. The old passion dream is forgotten, and, Estelle, you know what I would say. Will you?—will you be the sunbeam in whose brightness I shall forget all the shaded past?"

"But are you and Cousin Hattie not to be married?" asked Estelle, holding breathlessly the sweet joy that would fain spring up in her heart.

"No," said Willard; I told her of my love for you, and when that same morning you gave me back the ring you had worn so long, I felt that you were kindly sparing me the pain of a word—rejection; and oh, little Estelle, you do not know how I have suffered since that terrible morning!"

"I thought you and she were going to be married, and—and——" Estelle's face told the story—the suffering, the desolation that had passed because the love angel had wakened up in her heart for one whom she had thought lost to her forever.

"Say, little Estelle, has the angel come out from the shaded corner and unplumed its wings 'neath the blue sky of your heart?"

She answered, "Yes."

"And when September laid her crimson postscript on the green page of summer," the angel book-keeper recorded, of Estelle Newman and Willard Dutton, what is seldom written of those who walk together on earth—"In heart, in soul, and in mind they were married."

Home from the War.

[Dedicated to Major Oliver L. Baldwin.]

Across the twilight's shadowy gloom
Like mother-smiles the starbeams blow,
And o'er the faded jasmine bloom
The Summer breezes come and go.
The Summer breezes come and go,
A gladdened breath, a triumph-strain,
As lovely waters ebb and flow
When joyous with an evening rain.

A triumph-strain they come, I said,
A pean for the gallant brave,
And yet a requiem for the dead,
Who rest within their battle-grave,
The noble ones who fought and fell
When battling for a nation's right,
They sank in death and yet a spell
Protected *thee* with God-like might.

Was it thy sainted mother's wings
That hovered o'er thy brave young head?

Was it the strength prayer ever brings,
Or wert thou by an angel led?
Oh, patriot—brave! My bosom thrills
With thoughts my lips may never speak,
I strive to check the fount that fills
With tears the flushings of my cheek.

I strive to hush the voice that cries
Along the uplands in my heart!
I strive to write with tearless eyes
How noble and how brave thou art—
And yet my *woman's heart* will tell
Of battle-fields all stained with gore,
Where noble patriots fought and fell
To battle for us nevermore.

They poured their blood like Summer-rain
They only thought of Victory!
They heeded not wild cries of pain
Nor death—*for they were led by thee.*
No wonder that they faltered not
But fought "like freemen to be free,"
When ringing o'er that battle-spot
Was the wild cry for "*Liberty!*"

To Him who can best Understand.

I'll wear thy keepsake on my heart,
The tiny, sparkling, glittering thing,
As if its glare could heal the smart
Or sunshine to my bosom bring.

A tiny cord shall hold it there,
Like that which links my soul to thine,
A transient tie and yet how fair
Above a desolated shrine.

The darkness of a loveless life
Enshrouds me with its wearying gloom,
A gloom with bitter mem'ries rife
A shadow full of blighted bloom.

I cry for love with pleading moan,
Yet when 'tis offered turn with scorn,
For soon the transient thing is flown
Like fairy mists of fickle morn.

I pine for love, yet hate the name,
I scorn the loon who dares to say

His heart will e'er remain *the same*
Though countless ages roll away.

"The same, *the same*," yes smiling morn
To darkened earth of sunshine sings,
Yet fickle morn leaves earth forlorn
And to the night her glory brings.

"The same, the same," yes, flowers bloom
And cheat the earth with fragrance rare,
And yet in chilly Autumn's gloom
They leave her desolate and bare.

I plead for love, yet senseless cry,
The moan, how silly and how vain,
My faith is wrecked 'neath the lone sky
That memory hangs o'er heart and brain.

To Mrs. M. A. S——.

Oh, tender face by love made fair,
Oh, gentle eyes of shining blue!
Oh, sunny bands of golden hair,
Oh, brave heart, faithful, fond and true!
I reach my hands along the dark
Of starless Fate, with pleading moan
And steer the shivering of Life's bark
To meet the safety of thy own.
With drooping wing my lone heart flies
Through weary paths her tears can see
And strains her wistful, pleading eyes
And yearns for safety and *for thee.*

The dark clouds wrap the soulless sky,
The drear waves beat the rocky shore,
The winds along the uplands cry
Their raven-plaint of "*Nevermore.*"
And through the silence and the gloom
Like some lone sea-bird of the night,
That hovers o'er an ocean tomb,
My heart goes pleading for *the light.*

The light, the light, oh, faithful heart,
That breaks upon a golden shore,
Where thou wilt know *how dear thou art*
And hold my hand forevermore.

Oh, Life had been a drearier woe,
Oh, Fate had furled a blacker wing,
Oh, transient hopes that ebb and flow,
Had left my heart a wearier thing
Had not thy love, oh, tender heart,
Bent like "a rainbow o'er the tomb,"
For seeing e'er how brave thou art,
My Faith looks upward through the gloom.
Though memories flutter through the mist
And lay their fingers cold and chill
Upon the heart thy love has kissed
With flushings full of light and thrill,

Yet, tender heart, my Faith looks back
And bends herself on Calvary's hill,
And scorning all the weary track
Of life, casts off the damp and chill.
Casts off the chill and decks her wings
With rainbow-tintings of God's love,
And leaving transient, earthly things,
Looks off to radiant lands above,
Looks off and glowing angel-sights
Burst on her glad enraptured gaze,
And reaching towards the Eternal heights,
Her hands are full of love and praise.

Marion Grey.

Oh Marion Grey, the violets blow,
Over the paths of the Winter snow,
And the gay young birds in the branches sing,
On the breast of the April-hearted Spring,
And the sunbeams fall as fond and fair,
As the golden curls of a baby's hair.

Oh Marion Grey, on the shadowy track
Of your memory, doth the past come back?
Doth the blackness drop from a mad life-woe,
Do you stand again in the "Long Ago?"
Do you see the roses bud and blow,
And feel your pulses ebb and flow,
While hopes and wishes come and go,
As they were wont to, *long ago?*

Ah Marion Grey, how the years creep by,
Like a tear borne down on the breast of a sigh;
Like a cloud that floats o'er the noonday sun,
Or a rain that comes when the day is done.
And I lean o'er the hearthstone in my heart,
Where a joyous flame was wont to start,

And over the ashes cold and gray,
My heart half yearns, in the old fond way,
For the vanished light of a gladsome day,
That was bright with thy love, Marion Grey.

And, Marion Grey, the pain in my heart,
Where the joyous throb was wont to start,
Grows deeper and deeper, day by day,
As I gaze on the ashes cold and gray,
Of garlands once so grand and gay,
The bloom of thy love, Marion Grey!

Oh Marion Grey, do the demons know,
Two madder words in *eternal woe*,
Than the words that were our cruel fate,
The words that haunt me now, "*too late!*"
"Too late," *too late*, in midnight dreams
The words come back with fitful gleams,
Of all I've cherished, "loved and lost,"
In wretched "triumphs" of *terrible cost!*

And now o'er the waste that thy love made,
O'er the grave where my fondest dreams are laid,
O'er the shadowy deep of my wrecked heart's gloom,
Another love hangs its tropic bloom!
But Marion Grey, from the old hearthstone,
I hear the sound of a memory moan;
I feel the dash of a sorrow-wave—
I see the gloom of "*a hidden grave;*"

And look in a young face *fonder than thine*,
And hang it over the desolate shrine,
Of a heart that stifles its bitterest moan,
O'er the writing that gleams from its cold grave-
stone.

Ah Marion Grey, can I never forget
That even'—the last that we ever met?
Doth it haunt you too as it haunts me now,
'Till the throbs beat wild o'er your burning brow?
From the mystic realms of "that fairy land
The shadowy Past," do you feel my hand?
Are your pulses quick with memory's flow,
As you hear me whispering, calm and low?
Ah Marion Grey, you tell at last
Your love, when the time to speak hath passed;
Hath passed with you and passed with me,
For *I am bound*, and you are free.

Yes, you were free, for your love was dead
Before my bitter scorn, you said,
And my poor life, with its setting sun,
Was linked to a truer, braver one;
And turning then from the old lone way,
I walked with another, Marion Grey.
And now from the blight of Life's gay morn,
Some purer hopes in my heart are born—
And my faith looks up with a smiling eye,
To some Heaven-blooms that may never die.

Cry of the Motherless.

Mother, mother, through the shadows
  Of my earth-life canst thou see
All the weary tears that quiver
  From the heart that *moans for thee!*
Seest thou the roses, mother,
  Broken in my life and dead?
Knowest thou how many glad hopes
  From my eager grasp hath fled?

Look among the angels, mother,
  Standing round the shining Throne;
See if any there, my mother,
  Weary lives on earth have known;
Bid them join their voices, mother,
  With the pleading of thy own,
That I too may stand, my mother,
  Near the Great Eternal Throne!

Ah, the dreary darkness, mother,
  Presses nearer to my heart,

And from griefs I cannot smother,
Burning tears unbidden start.
Spring-time comes with bud and blossom
Slowly o'er the distant plain
Like a Future, full of promise,
To a Present, full of pain!

Oh that Future, leaning downward
With its golden, gleaming lights,
Like a smiling angel bending
From the gorgeous Eden-heights.
Is the Future when, sweet mother,
Those on earth will call me *dead*—
When the clover-buds will blossom
O'er my peaceful coffin-bed!

When I'll see the lilies blowing
On the glad Eternal shore,
And I'll hear the river flowing
Through the bloom for evermore;
Where no dim eyes will be watching
Through a bitter tearful rain—
Where no lone heart will be crying
To the winds its bitter pain.

Then oh pity me, my mother,
For the woe my life hath known,
Plead that I may stand, my mother,
Close beside thee—near the Throne.

Praises then my soul shall utter,
Praises to the Great Most High—
Songs shall gush o'er lips that quiver
Now, with bitter human cry.

To My Namesake.

Blue-eyed "Agnes Leonard,"
(Mother's name and mine,)
Ties so sweet and tender
Bind my heart to thine.
Hopes, the sweetest, brightest,
Cherished e'er shall be
With the love that blossoms
In my heart for thee.

Prayers so fond and tender
I will pray for thee,
That thy life's fair valley
Cloudless e'er may be.
May no fond dreams, darling,
Of thy heart's sweet bowers
Droop all broken, blighted,
Like some withered flowers.

May Love ever crown thee
Beautiful and bright.

May no rude storm, Agnes,
Aught thou lovest blight.
May Hope's snowy pinions
Guide through every gloom,
May thy life smile gladly
With its freight of bloom.

May God keep thee, Agnes,
When the storms are near
May His hand, my darling,
Stay each bitter tear.
And, sweet Agnes Leonard,
When the storms are o'er,
May I meet thee, dearest,
On "the other shore."

Thy Friendship.

[To Mrs. Vassie R. S——, of Shelby Co., Ky.]

The sweetest joy my life has known,
The fairest, sunniest light
That e'er was o'er my pathway thrown
In Sorrow's darkest night,

Is the pure friendship thou hast given,
Oh best-loved gift to me,
And sweet as twilight dreams of Heaven
The gift will ever be.

Like a pure sunbeam through the gloom
Of life's bleak Winter-morn,
Or like the Spring-time's early bloom
To trees that were forlorn.

Like sparkling foam on ocean waves,
Like starlight on the sea,
Like blooming buds on forest-graves,
Thy friendship is to me.

And every memory-wind will thrill
My heart with mournful bliss,
And turn it from each Future ill
To muse on hours like this.

Oh weary years must come and go,
Brief scenes of joy and glee,
This heart may break beneath its woe,
But ne'er unfaithful be.

The Coquette's Wager.

Fred Granville was twenty-eight years of age, wealthy, handsome and intellectual, (you perceive, reader, I mention the most important item first.) Do you wonder that he was a flirt? What was that you said? Never knew an intellectual man a flirt? But I tell you he *was* a flirt. It's essential to my story that he should be a flirt; so if you never knew one, allow me to introduce to you Mr. Fred Granville. Now that you've bowed and smiled, and expressed your happiness at making the acquaintance of my hero, I'll proceed.

It was a glorious day in the month of July—the summer sunshine poured down on the earth as if cooking it; nicely roasting it for the palate of some huge epicure. Pshaw! I perceive I'm not describing the day sentimentally, as story-writers generally do.

Well, you dear, imaginative reader, just conceive that it was a very romantic day, altogether as it should be—that above-named Fred was engaged in that most laudable of all employments, smoking

a cigar, and casting glances of unqualified admiration at his elevated heels.

"Ho, Fred, I've news for you."

It was a cheering voice that announced the arrival of Bob Reldon.

"Ah!" exclaimed Fred, tossing his cigar out the window, and turning to listen.

"Yes, sir, the celebrated coquette, Mabel Reeves, has laid a wager that she will bring you to her feet within six months from this date," said Bob, gleefully, rubbing his hands as he thought of the pleasant excitement to arise from the wager.

"What a *very modest* estimate she must place upon her attractions!" said Fred, with a good-humored sarcasm.

"There's no mistake about her being the most enchanting woman in New York," returned Bob, with enthusiasm.

"Haven't a doubt that she possesses the beauty of Venus, the dignity of Juno, the wisdom of Minerva, and the modesty of—well, whoever is goddess of that old-fashioned article that has grown valuable from its scarcity," said Fred, half bitterly.

"Pshaw, Fred, you've flirted so much, that you're disgusted with the whole sex. Now do be generous and surrender graciously your fascinating self to Miss Mabel," said Bob Reldon, playfully.

"Perhaps I will," returned Fred, in the same spirit; "but when does *ma belle* contemplate beginning her attack upon your humble servant?"

"Oh, she won't begin with you for some little time yet. She's going into the country, to spend a month or two with an aunt of her's, and win back roses to her cheeks from the breezy hills," explained Bob, with a mock sentimental air.

"Better try to win back truth and modesty," returned Fred.

"Really, Fred, you're so sour and cynical that I'm inclined to think you must have made a mistake, and sweetened your coffee with vinegar instead of sugar—I'll retire until you recover from its effects!" So saying, Bob Reldon departed.

Fred smiled a proud, self-satisfied smile, glanced in the mirror, (you see, my friend, that article is not patronized by feminines *exclusively*,) and then left for dinner.

Very handsome, proudly irresistible, looked Fred Granville, as he walked in the glittering path of the sunbeams—and yet, haughty, as he appeared, way down in his heart there was a yearning for something good and *true*. He had mingled with the fashionable butterflies that surrounded him—but the uncontrollable longing in his soul would not allow him to unite himself for life to the painted, insipid creatures that lisped nonsense and "waltzed divinely." Fred had eaten his dinner, taken a little lazy stroll, and returned to his office to think of Mabel Reeves.

"Fred, Fred, offer up a sacrifice to the gods for an idea that you'd pay me five hundred dollars for, if you had any conception how brilliant it is."

It was Bob Reldon again, and his quick, energetic tones roused Fred's curiosity to the highest pitch, and made him ask with animation,

"What is it, Bob? Out with it. Don't keep me waiting."

"Ha, ha, it's too good!" gasped Bob, almost convulsed with laughter, as he pointed to an advertisement in a daily paper that he held in his hand. Fred leaned anxiously forward and read that "Oak Hill Seminary wanted a teacher. Young man preferred." (The trustees of that school doubtless had marriageable daughters.)

"I don't see anything remarkable about that," said Fred, coldly, as he gazed half contemptuously at his laughing friend.

"Ha! ha! Fred, it's too good! ha! ha! Mabel Reeves ha! ha! is going there! ha! ha! Apply for the situation! ha! ha! Outwit her! ha! ha! ha!"

"It's a glorious idea!" said Fred, gazing at his friend in wondering admiration. "Stop your laughing and let's talk it over."

And they did. For two hours they talked, making arrangements for Fred to take the school at "Oak Hill Seminary" and outwit Mabel Reeves.

"Good evening, madam."

"Good evening, sir; walk in and take a seat."

It was a pleasant little cottage, and the vines

crept over it, shielding it from the sunshine and bathing it in perfume. 'Twas very inviting, so Fred Granville thought, as he walked in and took a seat on a low, old-fashioned chair.

"I s'pose you're our new teacher," said old Mrs. Mayfield, looking scrutinizingly at him.

"Yes, madam," returned Fred, trying to look as *teacherfied* as possible.

"What may your name be?" queried the old lady.

"Charles Brinkley, madam," answered Fred, blushing for the falsehood, while the truthful eyes of Mrs. Mayfield wandered over his face, noting the blush and setting it down as a "good sign, as it showed he warn't brazen."

Monday morning dawned (a remarkable circumstance) and Mr. Charles Brinkley (*alias* Fred Granville) took "the teacher's chair," and prepared to do penance for his many sins of "omission and commission." His terms were so extremely low that the house was crowded with *children* from six to twenty years of age. Half the day was spent, and Fred was eating cold peach pie, from his little dinner basket, and mentally contrasting "country and city life," when he heard one of the little girls say, "Ain't there a heap of scholars?" to which her companion replied, "Yes, it's cause he don't charge much."

Here was a new idea, and the next day a note was sent to each of the patrons, giving information that Mr. Charles Brinkley was obliged to raise his

rates of tuition. This had the desired effect, and only a few of the "better class" remained.

A week rolled away, and Fred was on the point of giving up in despair, when Mrs. Mayfield informed him that, "My niece, from New York, will be here to-morrow."

Fred was too much agitated to converse that evening, and so he retired early, thinking of Mabel Reeves.

The next day was Wednesday, and oh! the long school duties seemed interminable. They were over at last, and Fred walked home a trifle faster than he usually walked in his Broadway strolls. Mabel Reeves had a tall, queenly form, and her face had a regal beauty that was enchanting. Fred Granville bowed to the introduction Mrs. Mayfield gave, and looked with a half-defiant admiration down in a pair of dark blue eyes, as a merry, musical voice pronounced his name.

"What a waste of beauty on so heartless a flirt!" mentally exclaimed Fred, as he took a proffered seat. Mabel Reeves was evidently studying him, for, ever and anon, quick, sharp glances shot out from under her dark lashes toward him.

"Look till you're satisfied, queenly one! You mistake your man if you contemplate beholding Fred Granville kneeling at your feet," was Fred's mental exclamation.

"Don't call me Bell, aunty, call me May, as mother used to."

The tones were musically tremulous, and the moonlight laid a radiant crown on the regal brow of Mabel Reeves.

"Perhaps she isn't quite heartless after all!" soliloquized Fred, as, hidden by luxuriant vines, he could "observe unobserved."

There was a silence of some moments, and then Mrs. Mayfield said, in a kind of tender, rebuking tone, "See here, child, Mr. Brinkley, is a nice, clever young man, and I don't want you to go to breakin' his heart, as I hear you've been in the habit of doing young men."

Mabel gave a little confused laugh, aud said, "Breaking his heart! Why, aunty, I've no such intentions!"

"What do you mean by fixin' up in flowers and flounces of evenin's, then?" queried Mrs. Mayfield.

A blush flamed up over the face of Mabel Reeves, but she answered with forced gaiety,

"Why, aunty, I didn't know it was any harm to try to look pretty."

"No harm at all, if you have any idea of marrying him."

There was no reply to this; and after some moments Mrs. Mayfield continued,

"Mabel Reeves, answer me one question—don't you consider yourself a long ways ahead of Charles Brinkley?"

A husky, trembling voice answered,

"Oh, aunty, he's so much better than I am!"

A sob smote Fred's ear, and he blushed for his own unworthiness.

A moment they lingered in silence, then went in, leaving Fred most hopelessly in love with Mabel Reeves.

"I'll propose to her to-morrow evening," was Fred's mental exclamation as he went cautiously up to his room.

"How she has been slandered! Heartless coquette, indeed! She's as pure and truthful as sunlight!" were some of Fred's comments as he closed his eyes in vain attempts to sleep.

The morrow was a clear sunny morn in September, and Mabel Reeves sat singing gaily, fondly dreaming of Charles Brinkley.

"I have at last found one true, faithful heart," she murmured; and then her soul chanted a melody of gratitude to Heaven.

The sunshine crept round on the porch, making it so warm and sunny that Mabel was obliged to leave it. As she entered the cool, wide hall, she saw a brown envelope, directed in a bold, masculine hand-writing. Picking it up, she glanced at the superscription, and recognized the name of one of her New York admirers. Her curiosity was excited, and opening it, the first words that caught her eye were, Mabel Reeves.

That decided the little struggle going on in her breast, between honor and inclination, and she yielded to the latter. Her cheeks flushed and paled

as she read, and when she had finished, her eyes flashed indignantly as she exclaimed,

"Oh, oh! my bewitching Mr. Granville! how much pleasure you must have anticipated in *winning Mabel Reeves, and remaining unwon!* A brilliant idea, truly!"

A scornful curve was on her lip, and her cheeks burned with wounded pride; and yet, reader, an hour later Mabel Reeves was sobbing bitterly in her room. It was her first love and with her to love once was to love forever!

Poor Mabel! It was a day spent in utter desolation of soul, and yet when evening drew near, her eyes flashed proudly, and a scornful smile sat on her beautiful lips.

Very fascinating she appeared to Fred Granville, as she came in the misty twilight, and sat down where the honeysuckle blossoms drooped low and fragrant.

"Will you take a walk with me in the garden, Miss Mabel?"

Fred asked the question in musical, tender tones, that twenty-four hours before would have sent a thrill of bliss to the heart of Mabel, as it was she merely bowed a cold assent.

Fred was too much agitated to notice her manner, and the consequence was he carried out the intention he had formed the night previous.

Mabel listened in silence to his declaration. Once she was on the point of giving up, then she remem-

bered the letter that she clutched nervously, and asked in a tone meant to be sarcastic, but it was only tremulously anxious,

"Are you certain that you really love me?"

"Love you? Oh May, darling, I cannot tell *how* I love you!" said Fred, passionately.

With a mighty effort Mabel rose and said scornfully,

"Then I think, Mr. Granville, I've won my wager, for if I remember rightly, the six months have not expired!"

Fred sprang to his feet as if doubting the evidence of his own senses! In a few moments he recovered his self possession, and said, with a scorn that eclipsed hers,

"If Miss Reeves values her triumph, she is welcome to it!"

"Thank you!" replied Mabel, with mock humility.

A moment they stood regarding each other with intense scorn, and then 'twas Fred that broke the silence.

"Allow me to congratulate Miss Reeves on being so consummate an actress! From the little scene I witnessed last night, I am inclined to think she might make a fortune on the stage."

Mabel stared, bewildered, while Fred, as if to refresh her memory, began imitating her tones.

"'Don't call me Bell, aunty, call me May, as mother used to!'"

"How dare you?" almost screamed Mabel.

"It *is* strange how I should *dare* to spoil by a repetition so affecting a little speech. I don't suppose, however, I should have *dared* to, but for another interesting remark—'*Oh, aunty, he's so much better than I am!*'" answered Fred.

Mabel stood a moment irresolute.

"If I tell him I did not know he was there, he will know that I love him, so I cannot tell him," was her mental conclusion.

Controlling her voice, she said, haughtily,

"Mr. Granville does me much honor, to think my remarks *worthy* of repetition. Allow me to express my gratitude by returning a letter that I was so fortunate as to find."

Mabel swept proudly toward the house, but when only the starlight saw her, bitter tears fell thick and fast.

Pride, triumphant at the victory it had gained, laughed scornfully at the desolate heart throbs. The air seemed heavy, almost to suffocation, and Mabel walked out from the room into a wide hall, where the moonlight lay in broad shining bands. She seated herself by a low window, and the night winds soothed her, with a tender lullaby, until she fell asleep.

But what of Fred? On reaching his room, he began, with some trepidation, to read the letter Mabel had given him. It was one written the day after his first interview with her.

"No wonder she hated me?" he soliloquized;

"but then she needn't have been so deceitful?" he muttered savagely.

"Wouldn't *you* have done so?" queried an invisible questioner.

Fred was forced to confess that he would.

"But, then," muttered he, "that acting last night proves what a heartless actress she is—to bring up a dead mother's name for such a purpose."

Fred was disgusted! In silent, bitter reverie, he sat until the old clock, striking twelve, roused him. A sudden memory swept over his brain, and he sprang to his feet, exclaiming impetuously, "By Jove, it wasn't acting after all!"

He remembered that he had read the letter over that very morning, and intended to destroy it, so, of course, she couldn't have found it until after the little scene of the night before. His feelings underwent a complete change, and he murmured,

"Mabel, darling, what a wretch I was!"

It seemed as if the air was "in the plot," for it immediately began to stifle him in the same way it had done Mabel. So opening his door, he passed out into the broad hall that separated his room from Mabel's. He started as he saw the sleeping figure at the window, as he approached nearer, he saw tears resting on the pale face upturned in the moonlight; and his heart smote him.

"May, darling May," he whispered.

She started, but did not seem to comprehend the scene, until Fred murmured,

"Can you forgive me? Will you love me, Mabel, darling Mabel?"

Reader, the writer of this entertaining sketch has no experience in such scenes as must necessarily have followed. *Ergo*, she'll jump at the conclusion, and end by giving you the astounding information that they were *married*.

To "Grace Granville."

As the eager morning lifts her pallid face
To the crimson glory of the Sun's embrace,
So my heart is lifting up her eager eyes
Gazing on the splendor of her Being's skies;

Drinking in the glory that is newly-born
To her Night-worn valleys, in *thy loving's morn.*
Oh my Spirit-sister, darling unseen one,
I am like a violet in an April sun,

Lifting up its petals 'neath the forest-trees,
Bending to the kisses of the passing breeze,
Watching for the gladness of a stray sun-beam
Living in the shadow of a golden dream,

Waiting by the murmur of some woodland stream
Shadowed, yet how happy with a joyous dream,
Crowned with Hope's alluring, through the dark-
some night,
Waiting calm and patient for the morning-light.

Now the morn in splendor leans unto the earth,
And the blooms are joyous with the sunlight's birth,
Oh that radiant morning, fresh and fair and sweet,
Is thy fond affection that my heart doth greet

With a song whose gladness falls forevermore
Through the bloom that brightens all my Being's shore.
Yet though I am living in thy love's embrace,
Fain I'd look beloved in thy tender face.

I am like a violet knowing that afar
Leans the tender radiance of an evening star,
Yet the cloud of distance hides the star from me,
Part the dark cloud, Gracie, let me look on thee.

JUNE 10th.

Tenderly to my Sister.

Through the darkness and the shadows
Of some bitter, hopeless years,
I can see your sweet face, sister,
Shining on me through its tears;
Paling softly with the quiver
Of that faintly said "Farewell,"
Like the moonlight on a river
Sobbing in a lonesome dell.

In the crimson and the glory
Of this joyous Summer morn,
Memory tells again the story
Of some glad hopes that were born,
When your arms were round me, dearest,
And your lips were on my cheek,
And the thoughts, that lay the nearest
To my heart, I could not speak.

Strove I then to tell you, sister,
That I knew you'd come again

When the Summer's daisies kissed her
In the murmur of the rain.
And I strove to check the falling
Of your sad, prophetic tears,
For the anguish that was calling
From the Future's dreary years.

And I told you *I* was seeing
Only glad and golden hours
In the Future swiftly fleeing
Through the sunshine and the flowers.
But you only held me nearer
Whispering—"Little sister sweet,
May your life's sky be clearer,
Scattering sunshine at your feet,

Than your sister, in the bleakness
Of this morning hopes to know;
May your heart be full of meekness
Yet be strong for coming woe.
And when the dark shadows, dearest,
That your sister's heart can see,
Blight the hopes that life holds nearest
Still she'll ever *pray for thee.*

Dost thou know, my little darling,
Ere our mother went to sleep,
That she gave unto me, dearest,
Such a sacred "charge to keep,"

When I bent my tearful lashes
O'er her gentle, worshipped face,
While I read its tender flashes
Full of beauty and of grace?

Yes, the words were spoken softly
By my mother as I kissed her,
"When I'm dead, Virginia, darling,
You must love your little sister."
And I whispered, through the falling
Of some tears I could not smother,
As I fancied angels calling,—
"You may trust me, oh, my mother."

Oh the years, my little sister,
Have come slowly on apace
And as when I sadly kissed her
Now I see my mother's face.
'Tis not cold and chill, my darling,
In a dumb, relentless sleep,
But 'tis fair as when, my sister,
You were given me to keep.

Till I hear The River flowing
On the glad Eternal shore,
And I see the lilies blowing
Fair and fadeless evermore.
Till I say, oh, darling mother,
Wakened from your dreamless sleep,

I have no griefs now to smother,
I have no tears now to weep.

I have kept the charge, my mother,
Sweetest that I e'er have known,
I have loved her, as you bade me,
All the long years that have flown,
And I bring my "little sister"
To the shining jasper walls,
Pure as that last time you kissed her,
Listening to the angels' calls.

* * * * *

I must leave you now, my dearest,
May the angels guard you well,
To your heart may God be nearest,
Kiss me, little one,—*Farewell!*"

* * * * *

O'er the pallor, sister Jennie,
Of your face fell burning tears,
From the dark prophetic vision
Fancy wove of coming years.

In the crimson and the glory
Of those glad evanished years
Wondered I to hear the story
Of thy bosom's haunting fears,
And I said—sweet sister, dearest,
Life shall teach thee better things,

Joy shall show thee all thou fearest
From thy own sad Fancy springs.

Thus I whispered, darling sister,
In that morning's rosy glow.
Dreamed I not thy Fancy truly
Painted all the Future's woe.
Yet, my sister, though the shadows
O'er our lives are dark and long,
We'll forget their blackness, darling,
In the starry, angel-throng.

Impromptu.

[Written at the age of thirteen.]

"The earth is very bright, mother,
The flowers are very fair,"
The Summer-birds are on the wing
And blossoms scent the air.

But what are birds and flowers to me,
And all earth's brightest things?
Naught that I may not share with thee
Joy to my spirit brings.

I had a dream last night, mother,
A dream most sweetly strange,
I thought thou hadst come back to us
Thy home no more to change.

Oh how my heart with rapture filled,
My pulse with joy beat high,
But, oh, I found 'twas but a dream,
My joy was doomed to die.

I'm very lonely, mother dear,
Without thy cheering power,
Sometimes I think thy spirit's near
To cheer each lonely hour.

Twilight Musings.

In the silence and the shadow
Of this mystic twilight hour,
There are thoughts that haunt me strangely,
With their deep, unspoken power;
And I lean across the mem'ries,
Bridging 'tween my heart and thine,
Gazing on the hopes that, buried,
In my life no longer shine.

And the moon so fair and tender,
In her radiant vestal light,
And the stars that break in splendor
On the azure shores of night,
Seem only gleams of madness
From a broken, tortured heart,
With its buried dreams of gladness,
From the cruel world apart.

Ah, the past comes up before me,
Like a friend from distant lands,

And I strive to hold the pressure
  Of her shadowy worshipped hands.
I strive to breathe the perfume
  That once floated through her bloom,
But I only read the writing
  Fate has graven o'er her tomb.

I only see the gravestones
  Of the hopes I've "loved and lost,"
With the dead blooms falling o'er them
  In a cruel, blighting frost.
And the mem'ries gather o'er me,
  Like the flakes of winter snow,
Till the past that comes before me,
  Makes the present half a woe.

Yet I know the future leaneth
  From her regal home afar,
Like a tender smile that beameth
  From the evening's fairest star,
And I'll not untomb the buried
  Past we loved long ago,
To read again the splendor
  That but faded into woe.

As the days that May-time bringeth,
  Crowned with beauty and with light.
Only drop their regal glory
  In the bosom of the night,

Yet the day-dawn shineth fairer
When the darksome night is o'er,
So the light will break out clearer
On the glad Eternal shore.

When the storms of earth are over,
And the Heavenly land is won,
And the moaning and the torture
Of this weary life are done:
Then the cross that makes us wander,
Drooping weary foreheads down,
Will be taken from us, Marcus,
For a starry angel-crown.

In Memory of Annie E. Pryor.

Oh pure white blossom fallen asleep,
Oh shadowed eyes that will nevermore weep,
Oh forehead free from the lines of care,
Oh folded tresses of silken hair!
I see them weep o'er thy coffin-bed,
I hear them whisper *thou art dead.*

Yet my Faith looks up to golden lights
That flash from the gorgeous Eden-heights,
And I know where the silver fountains play
Through the fadeless bloom of an endless day,
Where the angels walk in a star-gemmed throng
And the breezes murmur a Heavenly song,

And the azure lights through the rainbows gleam,
And the woe of earth is a shadowy dream,
Where hopes are never "loved and lost,"
Nor rare blooms die in Winter-frost,
Where all is pure and bright and fair,
I know, sweet angel, *thou art there.*

I know that the moans of the wind and the rain,
With their mystic tales of a hidden pain,
Can bring no thought to thy gentle breast
To break thy calm, unbreathing rest.
I know the years may come and go,
Yet bring thee never a shadow of woe.

Then can I weep o'er thy gentle face,
Though the hearthstone holds a vacant place?
Can I weep that Heaven holds one more song,
That another walks in the angel-throng?
That a soul is redeemed from earthly woe
Though a sweet face lieth solemn and low?

I only bend o'er thy coffin-bed
And long for the rest of thy fair young head;
I only gaze on thy pallid cheek
And the gentle lips that may nevermore speak,
And think of an angel pure and bright,
That walks in the smiles of Eternal light.

To Nettie Scott,

[Of Frankfort, Ky.]

Nettie Scott, thy baby-beauty
Haunts me like a pleasant dream,
Woven when the May-blooms open
'Neath the moonlight's shadowy gleam,
O'er thy eyes so brown and dove-like
Droop thy lids with timid grace,
While a smile of tender gladness
Lies like sunlight o'er thy face.

Fairest blooms that deck the valleys
Find a rival in thy brow,
Naught that buds nor naught that blossoms
Is so sweet and pure as thou.
Like a joyous streamlet singing
Through a bed of tropic-flowers
Flows thy life unto the music
Of thy Being's happy hours.

May God lead thee, baby Nettie,
Through the paths thy feet must tread,

May He grant that sunlight ever
Linger round thy beauteous head,
And may all thy earthly valleys
Lead unto the Heaven-world
Where the glad Redeemed will greet thee
With their radiant wings unfurled.

Shadowed.

"Though I am yours it is my curse
Some ideal passion to rehearse."

I love thee, yet a shadow hangs
About my heart and brain—
A shadow like an evening cloud
Above an Autumn rain.
I love thee, yet a tear-drop starts,
To fall like molten lead;
I love thee, yet my heart bows down
O'er ashes of the dead.

I love thee, yet the Past comes back,
A ghostly, shadowy thing,
Until I feel that earth can ne'er
A fairer vision bring.
I love thee, yet the gravestones gleam
Along the cruel dark,
And all the blighted blooms of life
Some vanished pleasures mark.

I love thee, yet my heart doth hold
Some rooms thou hast not seen,
And never mortal hands, though bold,
Shall try the doors I ween.
I see thy glorious, flashing eye,
I hear thy murmured tone,
I breathe for thee the tender sigh
And vow I am thy own.

And yet a cloud is o'er my heart,
A shadow o'er my brain,
I feel a burning tear-drop start,
I hear a cry of pain.
I try to feel that I am thine,
I con thy burning words,
And yet my heart's an empty shrine
Where broken-pinioned birds
Flit in and out and breathe no song
Nor taste no breath of bloom,
But feel the weary days are long
Above the waste of gloom.

I see thy glorious, flashing eye,
I read thy generous heart,
I hear thy tender, yearning sigh
As cherished memories start.
And yet, as 'neath an Autumn sky,
Some lone bird sighs for Spring,
When broken wings refuse to fly
And life's a weary thing.

My heart beats restless pinions o'er
  The pale Past's shadowed grave,
And seeks to fly for evermore
  Where orange-blossoms wave;
Where tropic blooms their perfume breathe
  And silver fountains gleam,
And clinging vines there verdure wreathe
  About the poet-dream—

The poet-dream! Ah! yes, a dream,
  I thought the bloom thy heart,
I seemed to see the shining gleam
  Where silver fountains start;
I seemed to feel the tropic bloom
  That e'er from loving springs,
I half forgot the shadowy gloom
  My own sad memory brings.

* * * * *

I strive to feel thy arms around
  The graves that shadows woo,
I strive to feel my life is bound
  With love and beauty too;
And yet I only feel the gloom
  That shrouds a broken heart—
I only feel some blighted bloom
  Whence burning tear-drops start!

NEWCASTLE, KY.

In my Dream I got a Letter.

In my dream I got a letter,
  Eagerly I broke the seal,
Wond'ring if its contents, Marion,
  Would thy love or hate reveal!
Tenderly I bent above it,
  Trembling half with love and fear,
And my heart amid its waiting,
  Dropped a little quivering tear!

Then I looked upon the writing,
  Writing that I knew too well,
Such as came unto me, Marion,
  Breathing out thy last farewell!
In the dream-land still I lingered,
  Longing, daring not to read,
While my heart, with mournful cadence,
  Of its love began to plead.

Then I read, while my heart wakened
  To a newer, richer life,

For 'twas written—*can* I tell it?
Yes, 'twas written—"*be my wife!*"
'Mid the misty light of dream-land,
How I read each fond word o'er,
Conning then another lesson
Of love's witching wel-llearned lore!

Folded I the letter softly,
Laid it 'gainst my beating heart,
Wondering why, when one is happy,
Tears will oft unbidden start.
From the happy dream they woke me,
Caring not what bliss they broke,
Thinking not I'd sigh and murmur.
Would that I had never woke!

There's a gulf between us, Marion,
Oh, 'tis darkly broad and deep,
But my love can bridge it over,
When I'm with thee *in my sleep.*
In my dream I got a letter,
Eagerly I broke the seal;
I was very happy, Marion,
That it did thy love reveal!

To Madison.

Twice thy words have stirred the slumbers
  Of the waters in my soul,
And my pen, in poet-numbers,
  Struggles with a poor control
To express the tide of feeling
  Rushing through my heart and brain,
While my spirit-tears are stealing
  Softly as an evening rain.

By the wild and crushing sorrow—
  Sorrow that we each have known—
By the bliss we sought to borrow
  In the hopes that now have flown;
Cast aside thy mystic veiling—
  Let me look into thy eyes—
Let my soul read all the wailing
  Of thy Being's anguished cries.

* * * * *

Life is short, yet life is dreary,
  Hopes and sorrows come and go;

Human hearts with pain are weary
O'er the cherished lying low.
Though the violets bud and blossom
O'er thy buried idol's grave—
Though wild mem'ries through thy bosom,
Like some bitter storm-winds rave,

Yet, look up and thank the Father
That the loved one lieth low;
That the blooms above thy darling
All their gladness love to blow.
Thank Him that no tears are stealing
Down the paleness of her cheek;
That no tide of anguished feeling
Breaks in moans she cannot speak.

Soon the waiting will be over—
Wherefore, wherefore dost thou weep?
Such a host of angels hover
O'er thy darling's dreamless sleep.
Lift thy heart above the beating
Tempests of thy earth-life born;
Gird thy soul for that glad meeting
In the fair eternal morn.

NEWCASTLE, KY.

"Break! Break! Break!"

"Break, break, break!"
  Oh, desolate memory waves,
Ache, ache, ache!
  Mad heart, o'er thy "hidden graves."
Oh, well for the twittering birds
  That sing in the locust trees;
Nor weep over meaningless words;
  But list to the loving breeze!
And the dreary hours go by,
  Like a corpse to Eternity's sea;
But earth, nor sea, nor sky,
  Hath a glance of love for me!

Oh, desolate woe called "Life,"
  Oh, pitiful throbbing brain;
Oh, dreary, unending strife,
  Oh, wearying moans of pain;
Oh, hopes! I have "loved and lost,"
  Oh, sepulchre very far down;
Oh, *triumphs of terrible cost!*
  When I wear the "golden crown,"

Will your wearying, wearying woe,
  Drift out from my heart and brain?
Will the Heavenly waters flow
  With a melody drowning my pain?

To the Memory of Jessie,

Daughter of D. L. and Martha R. Shouse, who died in Kansas City, Mo., June 22nd, 1868.

On the Summer's wasted forehead
Hangs a wreath of faded bloom,
And the winds that sweep the grasses
Breathe a wailing note of gloom;
Seem to whisper of the fairest
Bud that left the Summer-time—
Left the storm wind and the shadow,
For the glorious Heaven clime.

Little Jessie! angel Jessie,
O'er thy narrow coffin bed,
Hopes the fondest, hopes the fairest,
From lone hearts forever fled.
Yet, oh! darling, when the song-birds
Leave us in the Summer-time,
Wing their way where no stern Autumn
Breaks upon a fairer clime,

Do we grieve that they have vanished
Ere the Storm King hushed their song?

Though we miss their radiant plumage,
Though we for their presence long;
Dream we not of that glad country
Where the orange blossoms wave,
Where no wild and wailing tempests
Ever in their madness rave?

Muse we not how glad and joyous
All their hearts in song they'll pour,
Listening to the tropic breezes,
While *we* hear our storm winds roar?
And though Winter comes to meet us
Mute and cold with pallid brow,
Like the ghost of some proud anguish,
Like a mad, unspoken vow;

Yet we would not call the song-birds,
From their land of blossoms sweet,
To our cold and cheerless valleys,
Where the storm and shadow meet,
So, oh JESSIE, little darling,
Singing with the angel-band,
Stay thou in that happy country,
In the joyous Heaven land.

SIMPSONVILLE, KY., July 3, 1863.

Away with the Traitor Flag!

[Dedicated to Lieutenant T. C. Grey.]

AIR—"*Bonnie Blue Flag.*"

"We are a band of brothers,"—in hardship, joy or toil,
Fighting for our Liberty on old Kentucky's soil,
For now our Union's threatened by rebels near and far,
Who fight beneath the traitor flag that bears a single star.

CHORUS—Hurrah—hurrah, for equal rights, hurrah.
Away with that selfish flag that bears a single star.

Let rabid South Carolina rashly take her stand,
But soon she'll find that all her hopes are only built on sand.
Davis, base usurper, and Stephens, traitor-knave,
Will only plot to fill at last a lone, dishonored grave.

CHORUS—Hurrah, etc.

Let Mississippi, Texas, Georgia and Florida,
All raise on high their traitor flag "that bears a single star;"

But "men of valor gather round the banner of the right,"
Kentucky and Indiana foremost in the fight!
CHORUS—Hurrah, etc.

And though Kentucky's sister, "the old Dominion State,"
With rebel-bands, by traitor-hands, was *forced* to link her fate,
Yet gallant patriots bold and true will come from near and far
To save her from the tyrant-flag "that bears a single star."
CHORUS—Hurrah, etc.

Then let us cheer our Union-boys, strong are they and brave,
Not "property"—but *Liberty*, true patriots fight to save.
And rather than the brave old flag should lose a single star,
Beneath the folds of the "stars and stripes" they'd die from home afar.
CHORUS—Hurrah, etc.

The Blind Minister's Love.

CHAPTER I.

"The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone. Shadows of evening fall around us, and the world seems but a dim reflection, itself a broader shadow. We look forward into the coming lonely night. The soul withdraws into itself. Then stars arise and the night is holy."

Romantic, careless glances would have pronounced Melicent Talbot almost hideous. Her face was not one that "had a story to tell," but her heart, oh, it could have told a story. Its wild yearnings—the setting of its great hope—the rising of its holy stars in the solemn night-time of its black desolation, could have been woven into a story whose sublime eloquence would have touched your heart like the sudden gushing of a dead mother's half forgotten song. Shall I tell it? Melicent Talbot's life-history? I will *try*, even while conscious that though my heart is wild with its

impassioned grandeur, I have no strong-pinioned words to bear the full force of the story unto you. No delicate dainty wing pure enough to waft its exquisite loveliness unto your soul, and stir up the great deeps of your nature. But oh, if you could *feel* the story as I do, 'twould need no intricate plot to make it interesting. I have told you God did not make her beautiful. Melicent Talbot! Melicent Talbot! my heart is full of pitying tears as I write it, for oh! woman! woman! (alas that it should be so!) when "Our Father" denies you a winning face what matters it if your yearning heart break with its unspoken longings for love and sympathy? I need not tell how the mother laid that face in its cradle bed and whispered through pleading tears, "My baby, if God would let you die, then you would be an angel, beautiful, my darling, so beautiful!"

But while many a radiant vision of infant loveliness, lay cold and still 'neath anguished mother-kisses, Melicent Talbot, the baby whose face was never brightened by triumph-glances of tender pride, did not die.

From babyhood to childhood, from childhood to womanhood her life climbed up. Caressing words and loving tones seemed ever seeking, with the forbearance of an unspoken compassion, to make her forget she was not beautiful. She did forget it. Love had ever come to her like the sunshine, unsought and unappreciated. With wealth and

home and friends, what knew she of seeking for love? 'Twas given—she enjoyed it, asking no questions whence or wherefore it came. And so the years passed on with caressing fingers until she met Oscar Reeves. What of him did you ask?

She loved him! Reader, if you are a woman you understand that sentence! 'Tis an epitome of what my pen has no power to write. He was not very tall—he was not particularly handsome; indeed, I do not remember a single feature you would have loved to dream about, save his eyes. If you have, like me, a passion for dark eyes, those eyes would have haunted you. I don't know why either. The world is full of dark, bright eyes; and yet these were peculiar. Perhaps you may have met such a pair of eyes; if so, you know how they haunted you—floating magically up through your day dreams, brightening your night visions, and haunting you persistently. Though you didn't love them, there was a kind of fascination about them indescribable, irresistible, and, Melicent Talbot, it was those eyes that made you forget that your face had no winning feature, no heavenly expression—nothing to win the love of such a man as Oscar Reeves.

'Twas one of those balmy Winter evenings, such as occasionally come, a sweet prophecy of the Spring-time, that Melicent Talbot sat waiting for Oscar Reeves. Waiting! perhaps to you 'tis sitting with idle fingers and busy fancies—with mem-

ories whose mournful music wails along the shadowed uplands of your heart like a woman's cry of pain. This, perchance, is "waiting" to you. With her 'twas now patting her foot in joyous eagerness on the soft hearth-rug—now running her fingers in glad anticipation over the piano keys, striking tenderly his favorite song, and now pressing her face up close to the window pane, waiting, oh! how eagerly, for Oscar Reeves.

He came, and drawing a chair up close to hers, made a few hurried commonplace remarks, as if the deep undercurrent of his soul were panting for utterance—struggling for expression, yet finding no avenue for the mighty torrent. He had confidence in her judgment, and believed her to be his friend. She knew his disposition, and as a brother would he ask it. Did she think he could be happier in fond endearments of home and affection, than listening to the pealing notes of fame and reveling in the mad intoxication of a world's approval? These were not exactly his words, but these were the questions he asked. Oh, Melicent Talbot, 'twas well your quivering heart's quick throbs were so "deeply buried from human eyes." And yet one less absorbed than Oscar Reeves in the *import* of your words could have read in your face a volume.

"I do not know *your* disposition, perhaps, so well as you imagine," she began; "but as for *myself* the approving tone of *one loved voice* would be dearer music than the applause of a million

worlds beside. Fame! oh, 'tis a glittering coronet with which to deck the brow; but, when the heart wears no radiant crown of affection, Fame has no power to light the darkness of its black abyss."

She spoke earnestly, and when Oscar Reeves said musingly, "'Tis true! you have decided the struggle in my heart," a happy splendor illumined her face, for her soul was dreaming wildly of love and Oscar Reeves. Alas, alas, for thee, poor Melicent Talbot! An unseen angel wept pitying tears when Oscar's answer came: "I have long admired, nay, *adored* Miss Katie Benton, but ambition has held in its iron grasp the unspoken words of tenderness that might have won her. You are my friend. I speak freely. Wish me joy and success in my suit!"

He spoke almost tenderly toward the last, yet with a faint attempt at playfulness, as if to hide a deeper feeling.

And Melicent Talbot? She did not faint—no, oh! no—but the setting sun of her life's great hope sank behind the mist-veiled mountains in her soul. The gushing fountains of love and joy in her heart were frozen by the bleak winds of despair, and 'neath those chilling blasts hope blossoms dropped their glowing petals and withered in the gathering darkness that veiled her soul as with a cloud.

He was gone; she remembered not one word that he had said, save that *he loved another!* What need had she to remember aught else, when that

stern, solemn woe wailed up from the deep, black abyss Fate had sunken in her heart? And now, through the darkness and desolation there fell a rain of tears, wild, bitter, and tempestuous. How long and dreary seemed the coming lonely night of life! Yet 'tis in such an hour as this that Our Father lends a pitying ear, and when the impassioned cry for "Mercy," that Melicent Talbot sent up, reached Heaven's high court, an angel went down into the deep valleys of her soul, and said unto the tempest, "Peace be still," and there "arose a great calm," while out in the midnight blackness of her Being's sky there shot some pure, bright stars of Faith and *Resignation.* Then, indeed, was the *night holy!*

CHAPTER II.

"Melicent Talbot, put your hand in mine, and say that *you*, at least, are my friend? Say, that now I am blind and dependent, and forsaken, you are still the gentle sister I have always known?"

There are some emotions too pure and self-sacrificing for words. Melicent Talbot's were, and so for answer she only bowed her head and left her heart's tenderest tears upon the hand of Oscar Reeves.

He felt how much more eloquent than speech they were, and so he whispered,

"God bless you, Melicent Talbot! God bless you!"

Ah! Fame had been a glittering dream, Ambition a goading fiend!

He had won the affection, if so great a misnomer can be tolerated, of Kate Benton, and they were betrothed; but he had put from him for a season the sweet love-dream, that he might win a name that she'd be proud to share.

"Man proposes, but God disposes!" His physicians said, "Keeping late hours, straining his eyes too severely, added to neglect, had made Oscar Reeves blind."

And so as the sunlight of Heaven was shut out from the darkened splendor of his once glorious eyes; the sunlight of hope that had shown unto his soul's yearning gaze, wealth and fame, and all earth's joys, died out from his heart; and she, who had promised, in the solemn hour of their betrothal, to walk with him all the days of her life turned from him in the hour of his greatest need. Oh, woman! 'Tis well thy sex has some redeeming ones, when thou dost so sin against thyself and God! Yes, the physicians said, 'twas "imprudence" that made Oscar Reeves blind. The angels *knew* better! *They* knew 'twas God's chastening sent to cleanse that proud, ambitious heart, and make it worthy of the great mercy that was to come veiled in the cloud of this great darkness. Oscar Reeves could see no mercy in it! Why should God thus afflict him? he asked, rebelliously.

He had chosen the ministry as his profession; and henceforth the residence of Mr. Talbot was to be his home.

'Twas there with Melicent Talbot that Oscar Reeves learned the sweet lesson which she had learned so long ago—*resignation to God's will and an abiding faith in God's mercy!*

Oh, they were pleasant days, spent in earnest, quiet conversation, in long, refreshing walks, and sometimes in prayer. Yes, she read from divine inspiration unto him, and they prayed together. And so, Melicent Talbot, for every heart-felt prayer or solemn song of praise your lips e'er uttered, for every hour of patient waiting, or gentle whispering of Divine love, your reward came. It seems too holy to write of; too sacred, reader, to place before your careless eyes; too pure for my pen to write of that hour, which to this day, Melicent Talbot, is your memory's brightest gem, the hour in which Oscar Reeves said unto you, "Melicent Talbot, my love for you has been the sweetest joy my life has ever known. Will you be my wife, darling?"

I cannot write of this. I do not feel worthy to write of that love, that pure abiding affection, not born of passion, but whose clinging tendrils an angel planted in the hearts of Melicent Talbot and Oscar Reeves, and whose history an angel pen has traced in characters of living light on the Eternal pages.

In Memoriam.

"Here hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light;—
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow."

Oh the violets in the woodland spring up fresh and fair and sweet,
With a graceful, airy motion like the bound of youthful feet;
And I hear the South wind blowing o'er the grave of Winter's gloom,
Like a pleasant river flowing through a bed of tropic bloom.
And the sunshine on the hill-tops in a long and golden gleam,
Reaches down into the valley like a gorgeous poet-dream—
Reaching o'er a heart to brighten all its silence and its gloom

With the sweet poetic fragrance of a radiant fancy bloom;
Reaching like a dream of Heaven o'er the wrung heart's troubled wave,
When it moans and breaks in madness *o'er a buried idol's grave;*
Telling of the buds that blossom on that radiant Eden-shore,
Smiling ever on the faces that we see on earth no more.
And the hands that used to linger in the pressure of our own,
Cull the blooms that are more fragrant than any we have known,
And the lips that used to thrill us with a matchless, nameless bliss,
Press their dewy, fragrant blooming in a grateful angel kiss,
On the brows, perchance, of "loved ones" who went from us long ago,
When we listened to the breezes through a buried spring-time blow.

Oh sweet face, still and solemn in thy "calm unbreathing sleep,"
May the Angels o'er the casket loving vigils ever keep;—
Though the soul now walks in gladness on the starry shores of light,

Knowing naught of human sadness, wailing in a
loveless night;
And when "the storms are over," and we reach
the golden shore,
In thy gentle arms, sweet angel, *hold the loved for-
evermore.*

NEWCASTLE, KY.

A Birthday Tribute.

TO MY BROTHER.

Such a glowing, radiant splendor flashes from the morning sky,
Like the lights so true and tender that are beaming from thine eye;
Oh, my only darling brother—Oh, my mother's cherished one,
Half my love I try to smother, that my words in rhyme may run!

But the eager tears are gushing o'er the flushing of my cheek,
And the tender thoughts are rushing into song I may not speak—
Into song that rushes gladly from my full and grateful heart
Into heart-hymns, telling softly what a priceless boon thou art.

Oh, thou camest in the blisses of the May-time fresh and sweet,
When the winds, with loving kisses, all the violets seem to greet;

And they say a rarer splendor decked the radiant
earth and sky,
And the sunlight grew more tender, as if searching
for thine eye,
When they bent above thee, brother, smiling on thy
natal morn,
And they said unto my father, "Unto thee a son is
born."

And I've heard that tears were misty in my
father's grateful eyes
As he turned them towards the city lying "just
beyond" the skies;
And because he prayed, my brother, Heaven's
blessing on his boy,
Thy young life, oh, Allan Leonard, e'er has been
that father's joy.

And about thy sister's pathway, when the glooms
were long and wide,
And "the billows of existence" rolled a dark and
bitter tide,
Thou wert ever like the dawning of a sunbeam
pure and bright—
Thou wert ever like the morning chasing off the
shadowed night.

E'en the tears, oh, darling brother, that I shed from
thee apart,
When *thy love shineth through them, make a rain-
bow in my heart;*

What are weak words, oh, my brother, when my heart they cannot speak—
When my soul is gushing upward in the teardrops on my cheek?

May God bless thee, oh, my brother, breathes my heart with tenderest cry—
May God keep thee, oh, my brother, when temptations hover nigh;
May "Our Father's" loving guidance make thy earth-life purely blest,
And at last, oh, may He lead thee to eternal peace and rest!

NEWCASTLE, KY.

My Congenial.

CHAPTER I.

I had been long possessed of a conviction, that somewhere on this "mundane sphere," there existed a being so perfectly congenial as to be indeed my "twin-spirit." 'Tis true the feeling was vague and undefined. An intuition not induced by any other outward circumstances than that few persons ever assented to, much less re-echoed my ideas of love, friendship, hatred, suicide, misery, and matrimony, (the last two being synonymous). And I could not believe that I was the only person who felt these things, and was sufficiently candid to express them, *ergo* my "soul-mate" must exist.

The length of time that I waited for this being to appear, seemed to me a half-grown eternity. Anxiously I scanned the faces of my new acquaintances, pouring out into their afflicted ears my "sentiments," "observations," "expressions," meditations," etc., concerning my favorite subjects. In vain! Their skulls were as thick as the rebel fortifications, and like "those," *evacuated!* To think I

had "brought out my artillery" of glances, smiles, etc.,—marshalled my ideas with McClellan precision —fatigued myself inexpressibly by my "double-quick" style of talking—to find "no fight after all," no argument, nothing but a skull fort evacuated! The quiet assent, the "unconditional surrender," was almost too much for my "poor nerves." But I was not discouraged—not I! The organ of hope was "then as now," much too large for "such a proceeding." *Nil desperandum!* I exclaimed, *à la* newly fledged college-boy.

I agreed with Thackeray, that there was "always a man for the occasion." That as "when it became necessary for Johnny Bull to be kicked out of America, Mr. Washington stepped forward and performed his duty." And as when it became necessary for The Book of Snobs to be written, Mr. Thackeray was created for that express purpose. So I could not but believe that when existence became an intolerable bore, because of its great need, that the being, the "twin-spirit," "soul-mate," the Congenial, whom you have in a previous paragraph (as a young lady is reported to have said of Niagara Falls) "*heard highly spoken of*" by me, would certainly make his appearance to annihilate *ennui*, and confiscate the otherwise slow, dragging hours of my unappreciated existence. They tell us that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." I felt the influence of the malady, and yet my cheeks remained as unromantically red as ever, and if I did look

lackadasical "at times," I could not perceive a particle of difference in "the weather" on that account. My "friends" (hope you notice the quotation marks, and don't imagine I'm so verdant as to believe the word anything but an unmitigated humbug!) supposed I was "in love." It certainly wasn't with them, I amiably informed them. This announcement, however, that indignation gave gratis, produced no other effect upon the wretches than a smile of—*stupidity*, of course! Do you imagine they could experience any other emotions than that and *curiosity?*

Some writers "have a way" of dashing into the most interesting part first, and then after they've victimized a poor reader into giving his attention, and snared his unsuspecting innocence into getting interested, they lead him backward, and tell him what ought to have been told "in the beginning," —I hope no one will accuse *me* of this most unpardonable offence! Have you read this far patiently, oh much abused, and perhaps after all, imaginary reader? If so, I will reward your largely developed "continuity" by proceeding, *i. e.* will, *à la* Widow Bedott, "*continer.*"

My Congenial proved to be a *postmaster!* (ye Gods and Union soldiers! I've been more particular about the superscription of my envelopes ever since!) I wanted a letter mailed away from home, and so concluded to enclose it to the postmaster at Setting Moon Station. Of course, I hadn't the

most remote idea what kind of a specimen of the *genus homo* he was! Was magnanimous, however, and told him I didn't care. Would permit him to mail that letter, even should he be so criminal as to be *married and ugly!* Didn't know the gentleman's address. Wanted P. M. to add it, as the gentleman had formerly resided at Setting Moon, and postmasters, like school teachers, are expected to know everything. Had "a misgiving," however, that the wretch might be so ignorant as not to know everybody's business and whereabouts, and told him in case he should be a fit subject for the Institution for Feeble Minded Males, to return the letter to "Miss Polly Woggle Primrose." I watched the stage savagely that bore off that important missive, and wondered if that postmaster would return the letter to me, and express "much regret that his ignorance would prevent me from accommodating me." What right had "such creatures" to live, I wanted to know? Why weren't they smothered with a red flannel shirt, and their clothes (the most important part of their "make up") given to somebody who did have brains sufficient to appreciate *the honor* of being permitted to minister, in the smallest degree, to my royal comfort. Nobody solved the problem—of course, I didn't ask any one, for if I couldn't, *who could?* Echo answered, (without any known reason for so doing) "nobody!" Of course, echo was an oracle of wisdom when *I* invoked her!

Never can I forget how I strove to "while away

the hours" of waiting, to hear from Setting Moon, by devouring enormous quantities of bread and butter over the spicy pages of "Frank Leslie's Budget of Fun." An article entitled "Mushroom Literati," particularly "attracted my attention," and I was about to recognize in its gifted author my long expected Fate, (I had expected him since my fourth year), when the little village of Castonville was electrified by a letter for Miss Polly Woggle Primrose! I wondered that "the sun did not refuse to shine by day, and the moon by night," from sheer astonishment! I congratulated myself and "fellow citizens," that Mount Vesuvius was not one of the attractions of Castonville, as I was confident an eruption would have taken place to "add to the grandeur of the scene," when the letter from Setting Moon was handed to me.

CHAPTER II.

My Congenial's name was "Davy!" I recognized the long-looked for being so soon as I had perused his epistle. Hope and memory were for a time at rest. I revelled in the glory of gratifying my *cacoethe scribendi* by answering the letter. "It is the hallucination of some moon-struck imagination," that "brevity is the soul of wit." I "begged leave to differ." Thought my letters extremely witty, though they were far from being *brief*. Davy

agreed with me! Weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly, (according as I had postage stamps), we continued to immortalize foolscap to each other. This, however, did not satisfy me. Does any reasonable person imagine there was any enjoyment in having constantly before my mind the provoking lines that Goldsmith, unfeeling wretch, must have perpetrated for my especial annoyance,

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen," etc.,

and possessing at the same time an intensely uncomfortable realization of the startling fact, that Castonville afforded but one beau, and he was—monopolized! Sister-crinolines—*there was not!* I felt no superabundance of gratitude that I was doomed to whiten "unseen," and "waste my sweetness" (jockey-club and millefleur) on the unappreciative scent of feminine noses! What did I care for the insignificant pressure of their dough-fingers, and the idiotic stare of their milk-pan rinsing eyes? Davy, too, thought it unnecessary and fast becoming impossible for us to exist so far apart—and so "we met."

I had become convinced that it would be a most refreshing way to vary the monotony of life and study, character, country people, corn-fields, and "the rising generation" generally, by taking a country school. Davy was apprised of my intention—thought it a good idea. Didn't think he had ever heard of a personage so miraculously entrancing as a young lady school teacher. Thought I might

write a book upon so original a character. Hoped I didn't expect him to propose, or at least to elope before my school was out. Told him I could wait a day or two and see "what would happen." Finally agreed to meet him in the city of L———, on the Saturday morning following.

It was very early when I bade my affectionate relatives an appropriate farewell, by emptying a quart or so of water over their unappreciative faces, and causing them to start up with a bewildered expression of countenance, as if unable to comprehend the calamity that was about to befall them in the shape of my departure. They comprehended at length, "cast rueful glances" at the streaming pillow cases, not ruffled half so much as their amiable tempers, and hoped the cars would run off the track and spill me in a horse-pond. I graciously thanked them by throwing one hair brush, two cologne bottles, and an inkstand bed-ward, and departed. I fancied "a smothered groan smote my ear." Could it be possible they had "let concealment, like a worm," etc.? Various thoughts flashed meteor-like through my brain, and dropping my band-box, six bundles, caba, fan, parasol and half-eaten sandwich, I rushed back to assure them of "a reciprocity of feeling."

I opened the door, and (Julius Cæsar, Winfield Scott and Parson Brownlow,) what a sight met my astonished gaze! My sister, my only sister, Sabina Susan, the belle of Castonville, "the woman in

white," the most angelic of mortals, bent over a washbowl stained with a crimson stream! What could it mean? Had that "smothered groan," in agony at my departure, broken a blood-vessel? Suspense was not to be endured. I would "know the worst." Did not, however, permit my curiosity and anguish to annihilate my presence of mind, consequently seized the camphor-bottle and castor oil, poured equal quantities of each in her eyes and ears, and entreated her to put the towel over her stained face, to keep from soiling my dress, and "come rest in this bosom" until she could acquire sufficient composure to bid me farewell. "An awful stillness reigned," save "there was a sound of ——" water dripping from her head, and then I learned that the wretch, the unfeeling female, Sabina Susan, was not weeping nor bursting blood-vessels for my departure, but pouring water upon her head because *the hair brush had struck her on the nose!* I was disgusted. "The crimson tide of life-blood," the tearful face and "smothered groan," were not, after all, because the stage stood waiting to bear my "remains" from the hitherto illuminated Castonville! I had no words to express my indignation. Gathered my bundles, *sans* half their original contents, and started stage-ward, where the agonized driver was sitting in mute helplessness fast verging into despair. One would have thought the wretch would have driven fast after so lengthy a rest, but he must have known I was enduring an initiatory

purgatory lest the cars should leave me, *ergo*, revenged himself by allowing the horses to move as if they had creation tacked to their heels, and were afraid of waking up somebody's baby. The yells of a thousand infantile wretches would have been music compared to the impatient throbs of my "longing heart,"—longing to behold Davy. We reached the cars at last. (A circumstance, by the way, at which, taking all the circumstances into consideration, I can never cease to wonder.) The conductor assisted me from the platform, with an air distractingly *blasé* and commonplace. What mattered it that the cars were crowded *ab initio ad finem*. What did I care that college boys and school girls attacked each other unmercifully—relentlessly displaying their fascinations regardless of consequences? Fourteen car-loads of college boys could have produced no effect on me, when I was expecting to meet "Davy,"—my Congenial; the Being perfect, because of his affinity to my delectable self. I took out my latest magazine, gazed affectionately upon its uncut leaves, and wondered how anything could appear so calm when I was in a state bordering upon distraction, arising from excessive delight that I had not "lived in vain," nor Davy in China, where he might never have heard of me! I told you some time since, "we met." A benevolent impulse prompted that, dear reader. I knew the anxiety of suspense, and I wished to spare you the agony of conjecture as to whether Davy and I really met after all.

After a vast amount of creaking and backing, and shaking, the cars stopped. I "felt the warnings of a fate!" Imagination grew eloquent in her description of Davy! Tall, graceful, white-browed, raven-tressed; full of dignity and manliness, my beau-ideal,—the hero of my dreams, etc., etc. Should I faint at the first glance of those "splendor-haunted" orbs, or only pale, and clutch—my parasol for support?

And "Davy?" What would be his emotions upon beholding me? Would he gaze at me in a long dumb trance of admiration, murmuring, mentally, Byron's words: "A long-haired girl, slender and tall?" And would he continue to be Byronic, and rejoice that I was not "*a dumpy woman.*"

Ah! yes! I was confident my "twin-spirit" could not do otherwise. Complacently, and with unutterable dignity, I drew my five feet seven to its fullest height, glanced compassionately upon those commonplace persons around me who were not like myself, rushing on to fate, (*i. e.*, Davy,) gave my hand passively to my brother, who waited to assist me from the cars, and then I looked for "Davy!" Bald heads and bushy heads, little heads and large heads, round ones and long ones, flitted before my eager gaze, yet I saw no traces of "The Being Beauteous, who unto my" care and keeping, and future hen-pecking, I fancied was to be given. I began to experience sensations strangely like "hope deferred," *ergo*, entreated brother to

call a carriage instantly, and permit my unhappy remains to be borne from that unappreciative depot. And yet a vision—"A strange bright dream would to me come," of what "might have been," had Hope been less deceptious!

Never before had the countenances of hackmen, draymen and newsboys seemed so perfectly idiotic. Never had the pavement a more unmeaning stare, and wheelbarrows a more grating sound. I mused upon the "vanity of life," the certainty of disappointment, the mutability of human affairs, and felt like giving utterance to my feelings in that sublime quotation: "This world's a wilderness of woe!" Never before had I felt the full force of that erudite remark of the lamented Deacon Bedott, "*We are all poor critters.*" What might have been the experiences of a man who could give utterance to such a sentiment? Doubtless he had, (true to the instincts of his genius, *à la* Byron, Dante, Petrarch, and myself, an *ideal love*,) before making the acquaintance of his devoted wife, known some "Jemima Jane," as "false and fair" as my Davy. I looked down at my trunk, and wondered if it must share my fate, and bear the now hateful cognomen of Miss Polly W. Primrose. Ah, Davy, Davy, I could not say with philosophical calmness, "Thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done!" I might have wept; but *tears and whitening!* Ye Gods! they were sworn enemies! E'en were it otherwise, should I weep for one so heartless?

No! I tightened my bonnet-strings with determination, and felt that my faith in mankind was wrecked.

"Forever wrecked, sweet girlhood's faith
Woke woman's withering scorn,
For the crimson lips smile cutting words,
That were strangers to them that morn."

"Cutting words," reader! Yes! "Cutting words" to the infatuated newsboy who thrust a bundle of papers under my nose. "Cutting words" to my brother, who inquired if I had the toothache, or only a fit of indigestion. Sternly I drew myself up in my new high-heeled gaiters and high-topped bonnet, and took my brother's arm with dignity. We were about to proceed to the carriage when some one blockaded our passage. I looked around indignantly. A diminutive creature in pantaloons said something to my brother, and then (oh, reader, how can I proceed, "spare me the details," "pity my misfortunes,") my five feet seven inches, increased by high-topped bonnet and heeled shoes to something less than six feet, was presented to *five feet two inches, as Davy!*

Did I "become insensible," and on my recovery find myself reclining on a neighboring tar-barrel? No, reader! With remarkable presence of mind, I bowed to the appalled Davy, who looked up at me as one might suppose a very small boy gazing upon a giraffe! "Words were inadequate!" "Lan-

guage failed!" My brother assisted me into the carriage, handed Davy his card, and I was "driven almost to distraction," and quite to the hotel, where I met a tall major, who has since rescued me from the miseries and mortifications of old maidism, that comes alike upon the child of wealth or of poverty, unless she distinguishes herself as the interesting heroine of our sketch has done!

NEWCASTLE, KY.

Over a Faded Now.

As some glad bird, from out the starry splendors,
of its heavenward flight;
Might bend with shining wing to view the darkness
of a lone abyss,—
My heart, with pallid brow and quivering lip, goes
back to night;
And gazes on the blackened ruins of a thing I once
called bliss.

Oh, broken flower! Oh, puny bloom! Oh, night-
shade of a buried past!
I crush thee, now, 'neath Pride's stern heel, and
scorn, upon thy gravestone cast.
Yet thou, Oh crushed, forsaken thing! wert once
the all of life that filled
The perfumed air my being breathed. The *all*
whose joy my pulses thrilled.

With eager, panting, trusting hope, I clasped and
held thee to my breast;

The great earth smiled upon my joy. "The Saints"
I thought "are not more blessed."
But drifting clouds o'ercast the sky. Thy petals
held a cruel thorn;
I felt the shadows of a night whose darkness in my
soul was born.

The homeless rains were all that flung an answer
to my spirit's moan;
And mem'ries clustered o'er my heart, like grasses
o'er a broken stone.
Ah, well! the pain is hushed and dead, I only see
a gleaming scar;
I'll shake thy image from my heart, as night might
drop a faded star.

I'll turn me from the "wannish light" that memory
sheds o'er what was thine;
My heart, like azure tinted Night, shall yield to
splendors more divine.
Oh, fallen star! The dreary void in which thy
vanished light went down,
Can never give thee back again, a jewel for my
Being's crown.

The light is quenched, the song is hushed, the dead
blooms deck a pallid face;

Oblivion holds thy love's cold corpse. *Within my heart thou hast no place.*
The night—the cruel night was long, but now my Being smiles in scorn.
On what hath been, and what doth fade before the crimson of the morn.

The morn hath come, the night has passed, and yet my life's a weary thing,
That flits amid its new-born blooms, like some lone bird with broken wing.
The sunshine is the same, that shone on the dead Past's deceitful glare;
And richer blooms, my Being's boughs—I know of late—have learned to bear.

Yet, as a human hand will lose, by toil, the niceness of its touch,
'Tis so, methinks, a heart grows hard, whose life hath sorrowed overmuch,
Grows hard, and passes by unseen, the richest, rarest blooms of earth,
And hears a hollow-hearted moan in every joyous sound of mirth.

And yet methinks, 'tis well the joys, corrupted by life's "moth and rust,"

Pall on our tastes, and leave the heart to crumble
to its native dust;
That from the ashes, cold and dead, the free, glad
spirit may arise,
On wings of joy to realms of bliss, whose portals
are the star-set skies.

NEWCASTLE, KY.

At the Gate.

Dreary gleams of twilight scatter shadows o'er the
barren moor,
White sails in the breezes flutter farther from the
yearning shore.
Waves, like memories, growing dimmer, circle
wider in the sea—
As the dreams, my heart hath cherished, faint and
perish—dreams of thee.

When the Spring her crown was wearing blushing
with her roses sweet,
And I listened at the gateway for the coming of
thy feet.
All the stars that gemmed the bosom of the azure-
tinted night,
Seemed like homes of radiant blessings sent to
crown my life with light.

Through the woods the winds kept sighing with a
weary troubled yearning,

And to see if thou wert coming, in the starlight I kept turning,
Holding down the beating quiver of my eager trembling heart,
Listening to the night winds shiver all the maple-leaves apart.

If I wearied long of waiting heart-beats shuddered in a moan,
Yet how soon the darkness and the dreary woodland shone,
And how quick my young heart took its gay expectant beat,
When I heard the welcome music of thy eager hastening feet.

Oh, Alonzo, eager-hearted at the gateway nevermore
Shall I strain my yearning glances o'er the dreary, dreary moor.
Other forms will cast their shadows close to mine along the shore,
And the sea will rush up madly with the old familiar roar.

But though memories twine their fingers round my young heart's deepest core,
Love for thee, oh, false Alonzo, can come to me nevermore.

Oh Alonzo, fickle minded, though the wound was long and deep
Yet the pain and throb and quiver now are wrapped in deathless sleep.

And though in my heart is written on thy gravestone "*Nevermore*,"
Yet my life hath richer blossoms than it ever knew before.
And a face, oh false Alonzo, truer, steadier than thine,
Beams on me in tender worship with a splendor half divine.

Oh Alonzo, in the silence of the Future's creeping years,
Will our dead Past glide before thee through some mists of unshed tears?
Wilt thou see the old moon rising like an airy phantom bride,
As it rose above the gateway where we lingered side by side?

Wilt thou strive to grasp my fingers through the mists of phantom years?
Wilt thou feel thy pale cheek burning with some eager memory-tears?
Wilt thou—but I care not, false Alonzo, what the thoughts that come to thee.

All our hopes and aims are separate, "*May God judge 'tween me and thee!*"
May I love and serve Him truly for *a dearer love than thine*,
May the pathway from "The City" fringe its golden blooms to mine!

NEWCASTLE, KY.

The Parting.

I've said a thousand times my heart,
With all its woe, might love no more—
That Memory ne'er from life could part,
Nor Love e'er haunt my soul's dark shore,
Yet now I know the ashes gray
But waited ere they sprung to flame,
Until thy hand should tune my heart
To breathe forever thy dear name.

Yes, now I know the years that fled
And left my heart a lonely thing
But vanished that, from ashes dead,
A fairer bloom might spring.
If I might tell thee all I feel,
And paint the rainbows in my heart,
Then thou wouldst know for woe or weal
I still am thine *where'er thou art!*

If I might pluck the fadeless bloom
That blossoms in my life for thee,

To light thy earth-life's weary gloom
I'd do it though 'twere death to me.
If all the joys I've sought or known,
If all the bliss I've hoped *might* be,
If all the maddening raptures flown
Were mine, *I'd give them all to thee!*

If rose-crowned earth and star-gemmed sky
Their rarest treasures gave to me
And joy would come if I should die,—
I'd give them all and life to thee.
I try to hush my pleading heart
And quell the rising memories there
To let thee quietly depart
And reason triumph o'er despair.

And yet a sad, wild, anguished moan
Breaks like a maddened ocean wave,
A voice that sighs "Alone—alone
With memory and 'a hidden grave.'"
A voice of love across the hush
Of woe that locks my shaded breast—
A tiny plant no storms may crush,
A flower that breathes of peace and rest.

Forever Love's fair fadeless bloom
Across my weary life will creep,

A star amid Fate's cruel gloom,
  Until they "lay me down to sleep."
Ah, it were madness now to dream
  Of joys that gild the vanished Past,
Of hopes that shed a transient gloom
  "Too bright, too beautiful to last."

For, oh, the smiles of Fate have flown,
  And I must say "Farewell" to thee—
Must hush my wrung heart's pleading moan
  And turn me back to misery!
To memory that by night and day
  Falls cold and ceaseless on my heart,
Nor wears the throbbing pulse away,
    But whispers e'er *how dear thou art!*

And rings forever through my brain
  A mingled song of hope and fear,
A note of joy—a cry of pain,
  A smile of bliss, a scalding tear;
And ever thus till life hath past,
  And pulseless lie my heart and brain,
Thy love a radiant gleam shall cast
  Across this parting's bitter pain.

A meteor o'er my life's dark sky,
  A blossom in a desert place,

Will be the memory of thine eye—
The memory of thy worshipped face.
And when life's weary task is done,
Its pleasures and its sorrows o'er,
When earth is passed and heaven is won,
I'll be thy own forevermore!